

REFORM/SC2020/004, SRSS/2018/01/FWC/002

Action Plan for Zasavje Coal Region in Transition



May 2021

Disclaimer: The presented document is an initial action plan for the transition from coal of the Zasavje coal region that will be used as a discussion document and roadmap for future planning. It was prepared in collaboration with regional and national stakeholders, and it is not the responsibility of the European Commission.

The Territorial Just Transition Plan will be a separate document and its content will be related to the action plan. The content of the action plan (including operations featured in chapter two) is yet to be discussed and adopted by the authorities on the national and European level. The Slovenian authorities are responsible for the final submission of the Territorial Just Transition Plans, which are further subject to negotiations with the European Commission.

This Action Plan is based on the National Strategy for transition from coal (hereafter: Strategy), which has not been adopted in the time of the preparation of this document. The year of the coal-phase out we followed was 2033, which was proposed in the Strategy, published for the public consultation in March 2021.

Izjava o omejitvi odgovornosti: Predstavljeni dokument je akcijski načrt za prehod iz premoga Zasavske premogovne regije, ki bo uporabljen kot dokument za razpravo in prihodnje načrtovanje. Pripravljen je bil v sodelovanju z regionalnimi in nacionalnimi deležniki ter ni odgovornost Evropske komisije.

Območni načrt bo ločen dokument, katerega vsebina bo povezana z akcijskim načrtom. Vsebina akcijskega načrta (vključno z operacijami predstavljenimi v drugem poglavju) še ni bila potrjena s strani nacionalnih in evropskih oblasti. Za pripravo območnih načrtov in pogajanja glede vsebine z Evropsko Komisijo so odgovorni upravni organi Republike Slovenije.

Ta akcijski načrt temelji na Nacionalni strategiji za izstop iz premoga in prestrukturiranje premogovnih regij (v nadaljevanju: Strategija), ki v času priprave tega dokumenta še ni bila sprejeta. Leto opustitve rabe premoga, ki smo mu sledili, je bilo leto 2033, kot je bilo predlagano v predlogu Strategije, objavljenem za javno posvetovanje marca 2021.

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1. Outline of the transition process and identification of the most negatively affected territories

1.1 Outline of the expected transition process towards a climate-neutral economy

As part of the 2020 Semester report¹, the European Commission identified approximately 100 regions or areas that are eligible to undergo the process of “just transition”. This is due to their dependence on fossil fuels or greenhouse gas-intensive industries. Among those regions, two Slovenian regions were identified, the Zasavje and SAŠA regions. Both were historically greatly influenced by the coal-mining tradition and the electricity production from this fossil fuel.

The exit from coal has started in 1999 when referendum results did not support the construction of the third unit of Trbovlje Thermal Power Plant (hereafter: TET). As the business logic of the near-by Trbovlje-Hrastnik coal mine (hereafter: RTH) was closely connected with TET, the decision to close the mine was made. At the request of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, the leadership of RTH published a study, which estimated the costs of closing the RTH by the end of 2015. The assessment was based on the conceptual designs of existing methods of mine closing and ecological and spatial remediation of the surface. In 2000, the Act of Regulating Gradual Closure of Trbovlje-Hrastnik Mine and Economic Restructuring of the Region was adopted (and later amended). In 2005, the closure works started and in 2013, the mining activities stopped. Shortly after, the TET closed as well.

In 2020, all necessary closure and rehabilitation works were carried out. Due to a larger than foreseen scope of works and costs in the medium-term program, some less-necessary closure and rehabilitation works have remained - mainly in the field of infrastructure renovation. The date of final rehabilitation depends on available funding, administrative procedures, or technical inspections. Realistically, rehabilitation works could be carried out by the end of 2021; technical inspections and elimination of deficiencies in 2022, and completion of administrative procedures and deletion from the register by the end of 2023.

Open cave areas (approximately 10 km) will remain open even after the mine is cleared. In addition to the basic purpose (drainage), they can also be used for other economic purposes (e.g., tourism). The same applies to other mine-related facilities, which have been placed in spatial planning documents of the local government.

The strong coal mining industry transformed the region from a rural area to an industrial area. In addition to coal mining, other industries developed (including glass, zinc, ceramic, chemical and bricks). Currently, the glass industry is still largely present in the region. It is one of the key employers, and one of the key polluters, included in the European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS). The further transition to climate neutrality, therefore, needs to also enable the green transformation of those polluters. This includes providing green energy solutions, the development of carbon-neutral technologies and new digital solutions, which are all envisioned in this document.

In the transition from coal, the socio-economic transition on the regional level was not finished. The GDP and employment rates are both below the Slovenian average. The GDP per capita amounts to 53% of the

¹ Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/SL/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0523&from=EN>

national average, (compared to 73.6% in 2000), which makes Zasavje one of the poorest regions. Moreover, since 2013, some 5,000 jobs have been lost in mining and mining related economic activities. Today, most of the inhabitants commute daily to neighbouring cities for work due to significant lack of employment opportunities in the region, particularly in high value-added jobs.

The extensive research (the Report on Analysis of Key Opportunities and Challenges made in the process of the preparation of national strategy and action plans for transition from coal of Slovenian coal regions in 2020) defined the main development needs in the region and showed that the transition towards a climate-neutral economy in the region should focus on socio-economic development, which would positively influence GDP and employment rate.

To holistically address the development needs the National Strategy for Transition from Coal of Slovenian Coal Regions (hereafter: the Strategy) is envisioned to be adopted in 2021. It sets five strategic objectives, which need to be achieved by 2050. Based on those broad objectives, the objectives for the Territorial Just Transition Plan were developed. (See Chapter 2.2, where needs and objectives are explained in more details).

Moreover, the resolution on Slovenia's long-term climate strategy until 2050 (hereafter: DPS 2050) places the coal phase-out and other fossil fuels as one of the key sectors for decarbonising the energy supply sector, which also supports the decarbonisation of other sectors. According to the National Energy and Climate Plan (hereafter: NECP), the DPS 2050 envisages that the use of coal will be reduced by up to 30% by 2030 compared to 2005, after which coal will be exploited at only one location in Slovenia. In accordance with the NECP, it also states that Slovenia will adopt a timetable for the abandonment of coal use in the National Strategy for Transition from Coal of Slovenian Coal Regions by the end of 2021.

Timeline and operations overview

The exit from coal was already completed in the Zasavje region. *Lex specialis* was established to provide the foundations of the phase-out process (see chapter 2.1 for more details) but so far, the transition has not performed in line with the just transition principles. The activities were focused narrowly on the mine closure procedures and mitigating the challenges related to the social status of redundant workers. In doing so, the socio-economic aspects of the transition remained unresolved. This situation calls for a specific approach focusing on specific elements of just transition.

Firstly, a horizontal platform providing a knowledge base for a focused and evidence-based transition process needs to be established. The regional centre for just transition will support the local communities in its efforts to provide just transition for all segments of the affected society. It will also provide project-related support in all phases of the project cycle thus facilitating the implementation of the plan and ensuring adequate maturity and quality of projects/operations.

The second step is to prepare the areas/land for further activities. These include operations addressing regeneration and repurposing of land, degraded in coal-mining activities, and decommissioning and repurposing of coal-related infrastructure. The preparation of the areas, which are not coal-related, for the investments in buildings and equipment, will start at this step.

Simultaneously, the operations, which actively promote the development of regional entrepreneurship and innovation will begin. This will include the establishment of the centre for social innovation and the regional (service) platform for the development and growth of local SMEs. Both will catalyse the processes in step three.

Thirdly, construction works (and equipping the new buildings) on the prepared decontaminated land will start. The activities will include setting up a technology park, preparing a business zone for regional SMEs in the abandoned mine infrastructure, preparing infrastructure for green energy and heat production and building community care apartments. In general, at this step, all infrastructure should be ready to enable the establishment or beginning of work for most envisaged activities.

Moreover, automation and digitalization of key economic activities will be supported to improve its' competitive position in the global value chains. These types of investments are particularly important in the following sectors: glass, furniture and home products, electric components manufacture, manufacture of the equipment for hydroelectric power plants, and lighting.

Fourthly, the established real estate and infrastructure will be provided crucial contents. Operations content-wise anticipate (i) establishment of (research, development, training, production) centres in the wood and aerospace industries, and for the low-carbon technologies; (ii) beginning of research and development activities of technologies for production and storage of green hydrogen (related to the solar power plant infrastructure set up in the previous step), (iii) establishment of a regional network of organizations conducting research and development of products for electrical installations in smart buildings, cities, e-mobility and battery storage, and (iv) setting up the Institute of Measurement Sciences & Audio-Visual Laboratory.

All the mentioned operations and activities are envisioned to be done by 2030. In the following decade (until 2040), the region is expected to build-upon activities performed, fuelling a self-sufficient upward transition spiral and overall socio-economic development. For example, new spin-offs are expected to be established based on the R&D activities, research on renewable energy sources (hereafter: RES) and low-carbon technologies are expected to result in implementation of these technologies in (at least) regional manufacturing systems (e.g., green energy in glass production, etc.), less brain drain as the result of interesting, high-value-added jobs provided in the region, and similar.

1.2 Identifying the territories expected to be the most negatively affected

Today, the Zasavje statistical region includes four municipalities, namely, Hrastnik, Trbovlje, Zagorje ob Savi, and Litija. All mentioned municipalities form the Zasavje development region.

Municipalities of Hrastnik, Trbovlje, and Zagorje ob Savi are generally recognized as mining areas with a rich coal-mining tradition. Due to the maturity of coal phase-out process in the region, the key impact area of the coal industry could be clearly recognized in those three municipalities. There, holders of mining rights carried out all activities, so they were facing (and still are facing) several environmental, economic, and social challenges in the process of coal phase-out. For this document's needs and investment focus, the area is limited to a geographically, socially, and politically complete whole.

However, the third Article of the Act Regulation gradual Closure of the Trbovlje-Hrastnik Mine and Economic Restructuring of the Region, includes Hrastnik, Trbovlje, and Zagorje ob Savi, as well municipalities Litija, Šmartno pri Litiji, Radeče, and Laško. This decision is based on the recognized common challenges related to the phase-out of coal- and energy-related activities. Based on this regulation and the fact, that Litija is a part of the Zasavje statistical and developmental region, the projects, included in Territorial Just Transition Plans for Zasavje, could be undertaken in the municipality of Litija. The acceptance of those kinds of projects is dependent on the clearly shown positive influence of the three municipalities in the so-called key (mining) impact area.

2. Assessment of transition challenges

2.1 Assessment of the economic, social, and territorial impact of the transition to a climate-neutral economy

Today, Zasavje has more than a two hundred- and fifty-years-old mining tradition that shaped local culture, significantly impacted the local environment, and for centuries dictated the economic development of the region. As mentioned, the region already started the process of phasing out from the coal industry. The region completely abandoned coal-related activities in 2014 with the closure of the Trbovlje Thermal Power Plant. When the decision on closing RTH was made, the coal production there was approximately 500,000 tons of coal. The closure process was specified in the Act Regulating the Gradual Closure of the Trbovlje-Hrastnik Mine and the Economic Development Restructuring of the Region. The Act also provided 221,497,886.39 € funding from the national budget for closing the mine until the year 2020. Together with the remaining funds (own funds, assets, loans), according to the information provided the Slovenian Ministry of Infrastructure, a total of 236,961,326.00 € was invested in closure and closure-related activities.

The region is still profoundly shaped by its mining tradition that less than two decades ago, in 2002, still directly employed approx. 1350 workers which represented 14% of the region's working population. In 2019, 41,630 people were living in the described narrow area (Trbovlje, Zagorje ob Savi, and Hrastnik). In total these numbers are even higher since by some estimations throughout the process of coal phase-out approximately 5.000 jobs were lost in the region. The loss of these jobs represented a big challenge for local communities and forced the region into an ongoing socio-economic transition.

The decline of the energy sector, on the other hand, resulted in growing economic reliance on the rich technical knowledge of the past. For that, the glass, electrical, chemical, foundry and mechanical industries are key pillars of today's local economy. At the same time, innovative small and medium-sized enterprises in the field of information technologies and new materials are being developed.

Despite the significant contribution of the region to the decarbonisation endeavours by phasing-out coal, the economic structure keeps the region on the map of heavy emitters regardless of its small size. In 2019, verified emissions from ETS installations in the regions amounted to 132,402 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (SAŠA region: 3,817,347 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent; total Slovenian verified emissions: 6,3 million tonnes CO₂ equivalent). Installations involved in the ETS scheme were: Lafarge Cement, d.o.o. (0 verified emissions in 2019), IGM Zagorje, d.o.o., Steklarna Hrastnik-Vitrum, d.o.o., Komunala Trbovlje, d.o.o., TKI Hrastnik, d.d., and Steklarna Hrastnik - Special d.o.o. Those companies are the largest contributions to the region's greenhouse gas emissions. In efforts to achieve climate neutrality, those companies will have to go through some form of "green transformation" soon.

With the coal phase-out, the local environment is also in the transition phase where some areas have already been revitalised while other areas and coal-related infrastructure still need to be decommissioned, decontaminated, repurposed, or revitalized. This area includes properties such as abandoned Thermal Power Plant and various landfill for coal-related waste.

In addition to the economic and environmental impact, the region is also facing various social and energy challenges (See Chapter 2.2) that are directly or indirectly related to the transition to a climate-neutral

economy. Such challenges include a declining population, lack of sufficient social infrastructure, historical mind-set of “life-long job safety”, lack of employment possibilities and untapped potential of RES.

2.2 Development needs and objectives by 2030 in view of reaching climate neutrality

2.2.1 Development needs

To gain insight into the current situation in the Zasavje coal region, a thorough strategic maturity analysis (hereafter: SMA) was carried out. Within it, four topics of just transition were considered – energy transition, transition of human capital and social infrastructure, transition of economy and transition of the environment. Data was obtained through stakeholder dialogues and official statistics. Stakeholder dialogues were done in a form of interviews, field visits and workshops, which were done from June to August of 2020. More information about the stakeholders involved can be found in the Analytical Report². The goal of SMA was to understand the main development needs, which need to be addressed in the transition.

Generally, there is a declining population number in the region and better living and working conditions within the region need to be provided. As previously mentioned, the economic standard of the region in terms of increased available household income needs to be increased as well.

Human capital overview

To understand the situation regarding the human capital and social infrastructure in Zasavje region, the Strategic Maturity Assessment was done in 2020. The data for the assessment came from the interviews, field visits, and desk research. Seven dimensions were graded by different features, where each feature got the grade from 1 (lowest grade) to 4 (highest grade). The observed dimensions and features were:

- **Local educational system** (informal education; formal education; Links between research, education, and real sector)
- **Competences** (Availability of relevant knowledge)
- **Mind-set** (Entrepreneurial mind-set; affection for change; affection for lifelong learning)
- **Job complexity** (High value added jobs)
- **Employment** (Employment)
- **(Social) infrastructure** (Housing; Accommodation for vulnerable groups (elderly, disabled); Accommodation infrastructure; Other local infrastructure; Migration)
- **Public sector** (Public institutions)

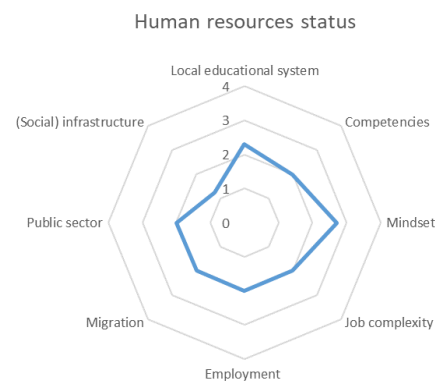


Figure 1: As-is situation in Zasavje region in 2020 as regards to the human capital and social infrastructure.

In terms of informal education, there are diverse training programs available, however only project-based (no long-term programs), and directly linked to the funding available. Moreover, the informal programs are mostly available for groups with basic competencies and are usually not targeted to all groups of people (younger and older). The data from the annual performance report 2019 shows that around 2000 people participated in the programs, which is relatively optimistic. Therefore, there are quite a lot of programs and the demand is sufficient and rising.

² the Report on Analysis of Key Opportunities and Challenges made in the process of the preparation of national strategy and action plans for transition from coal of Slovenian coal regions, 2020 (hereafter: Analytical Report)

There is no educational institution that offers tertiary education. There is no secondary school in Hrastnik and there are not enough medically focused programs or school centre. Many students decide to leave the region to get secondary education elsewhere and the needs of local employers are not sufficiently covered by the educational system. Although some quality programs are available (for example at the Trbovlje Secondary Technical and Vocational School (STPŠ) and Gymnasium and economic secondary school Trbovlje (GESŠ)), these institutions have problems attracting enough students. There are almost no research and development institutions. The exception is STPŠ Trbovlje and large companies, which have their own R&D. However, companies mostly collaborate with R&D institutions outside the region (e.g., Universities in Ljubljana and Maribor)

There is no sufficient connection between the real sector and educational organizations, thus knowledge is mostly not relevant for local employers. There is a need for ICT professionals and medical staff, however, there are no programs for these professions at the secondary school level. This problem was intended to be solved with the use of scholarships; however, larger employers are not particularly interested in participating in such schemes. There are too many people with a social science profile, who are not regionally employable. Digital and reading literacy is improving, however, functional literacy remains low.

The historical mind-set of "life-long job safety" led into the general lack of an entrepreneurial mindset in the region, which is still largely present. There are some entrepreneurial educational programs in STPŠ, at the Regional Developmental Agency, and Katapult, which is a business accelerator. However, effort is still needed to change the generational mindset and more programs promoting entrepreneurial skill development are needed, especially in early education. The mine closure brought changes in the region and was a strong external motivator for entrepreneurship. Despite the historical "non-entrepreneurial" mindset, stakeholders estimate that local community is now somehow open to change. An important proof of this process is an ecosystem around a successful local enterprise Dewesoft, which is a leading provider of high-end data acquisition systems. There is a multigenerational centre in the region and project-based activities are available, however, the motivation of older locals to attend those programs is very low. Those older generations think there is no need for lifelong learning and are not very enthusiastic about joining these kinds of programs. However, the youth are enthusiastic and entrepreneurial, however, they often pursue opportunities elsewhere.

With the closure of the mine, many of high value adding jobs disappeared and a lot of miners went into early retirement, which resulted in a high number of young retirees. There are two large employers with a production focus where the elementary workforce is employed. Highly skilled workforce mostly migrates to bigger cities such as Ljubljana and Celje, with the exception being large employers that mostly employ local professionals from ICT.

Data shows that more vacant positions are currently available for highly skilled professionals than for low-skilled professionals. This is not in line with the educational skillset in the region. The demand for well educated professionals motivates people to continue their studies in Ljubljana or elsewhere. With this comes the risk of migration and later working outside the native municipality or region. The unemployment rate is constantly above the Slovenian average. Most of the employment is provided by the hospital and three larger employers in the region. Two of those have production sites and employ elementary workforce. All employers are looking for professionals such as ICT and medical that are difficult to attract in the region. Most of the high skilled professionals commute daily from the region for work.

Based on the described assessment, and predictions from the interviews, the knowledge related to energy industry is still well represented in the region and should be further used and developed after the coal mine closure. However, the elementary workers that were working for the coal mine, were not carefully considered in the transition. There is still a large percentage of elementary workers that work in local factories or commute daily to other cities. Those and young retirees (ex-miners) should be targeted with specific reskilling and upskilling programs. Predictions of Skill Panorama (2021) are that mining and quarrying professions in Slovenia will decline by 10.2%. However, the employment of elementary workers (including cleaners and helpers, agricultural labourers, food preparation helpers, and technical labourers) are to increase by 20.5%. As there is already a need for researchers, engineers, and ICT professionals, reskilling of the workers in the fossil-intensive industry could help fill those roles.

Operations, which directly or indirectly address reskilling and upskilling needs are operation 3, operation 4, operation 5, and operation 6.

General overview on the development needs

Recognized development needs related to the **energy transition** include the need to:

- Assure a higher share of energy from RES;
- Increase capacity and energy storage capacity, including the development of hydrogen technologies and the use of batteries;
- Increase energy efficiency;
- Preserve and upgrade energy sites in the regions.

Development needs related to the **transition of human capital and social infrastructure** include the need to:

- Assure better availability of relevant knowledge and competencies, in particular by strengthening links between research centres, educational institutions and the business sector;
- Change the outdated mentality of a long-term job security into a more entrepreneurial mindset of the whole generation and providing more programs to promote entrepreneurial competences (especially early in the educational process);
- Create high value-added jobs in the region;
- Create greater employment opportunities in the region and thus less daily and permanent labour migration from the region;
- Reskilling and upskilling of workers, who are currently unemployed due to the transition
- Invest in the development of social infrastructure, providing the accommodation for vulnerable groups, which are negatively impacted due to coal phase-out.

Development needs related to the **transition of the economy** include the need to:

- Diversify the local economy in terms of sectoral and size diversity;
- Invest in the further development of industries such as the electrical industry, new technologies (IT, space and measurement technologies), production and processing of metals and non-metals, and agriculture in connection with self-sufficiency;
- Ensure greater capacity of the business environment to attract public and private financing of companies (direct domestic and foreign investments);
- Ensure further support and incentives for the start-up ecosystem in the region and incentives for investment in research, development, and innovation (hereinafter: RDI).

Development needs related to the **transition of the environment** include the need to:

- Improve air quality in the region and the fastest possible transition to clean and renewable energy sources;
- Promote harmonious spatial development with optimal utilization of spatially and environmentally degraded areas, while taking into account the geotechnical characteristics and stability of these areas;
- Monitor and control spatially and environmentally degraded areas;
- Ensure rehabilitation and exploitation of the potential of spatially and environmentally devalued industrial areas.

2.2.2 Objectives

Based on the identified needs, strategic objectives until 2050 were set and described in the National Strategy for Transition from Coal of Slovenian Coal Regions. Those five strategic objectives (hereafter: SO) and operational objectives are expected to be achieved through implementing the operations in territorial just transition plans. As this document predicts a shorter period (until 2030 with an outlook until 2040), all objectives set in the Strategy are not equally addressed.³

In chapter 2.5 the specific output or result indicators are set to monitor the realization of operational objectives.

Strategic objective 1: Quality living and natural environment

Operational objectives addressed with the Territorial Just Transition Plan:

- Making an evidence of all depreciated areas and their condition (extent, type and manner of depreciation, risk to the environment and human health), determination of future use of degraded areas, definition of the method and timeline of (spatial, environmental, and functional) remediation, completion of closures part and complete rehabilitation of areas related to coal mining and coal use.
- Optimization of the use of space for the provision of economic activity.
- Modern business and production centres needed to support key enterprises and their ecosystem (e.g., new warehouses, internal start-up / business incubators, offices, production, etc.).
- Providing quality programs for vulnerable groups, which were negatively impacted due to coal phase-out, such as the unemployed, those at risk of social exclusion, the elderly.
- Priority promotion of the renovation of buildings where people are more sensitive to heat waves, while contributing to the reduction of energy consumption. **Not specifically covered by proposed operations.**

Strategic objective 2: Highly motivated and skilled citizens

Operational objectives addressed with the Territorial Just Transition Plan:

- Actively addressing the brain drain through scholarship schemes linking students and major regional employers. **Not specifically covered by proposed operations.**
- Invest in supporting “mind-set change” activities, which improve entrepreneurial skills and mind-set, and affection to life-long learning and changes.

- Establishment of a network of regional promoters (e.g., very successful individuals and enthusiasts).
- Caring for vulnerable groups and reducing social inequalities related to the challenges of coal mining (support for retired miners, especially the disabled and those injured in mining accidents, etc.) and helping them develop a fitting skillset.
- Introduction of circular content into the system of formal and non-formal education.

Strategic objective 3: A diversified and resilient regional economy

Operational objectives addressed with the Territorial Just Transition Plan:

- Revitalization of the coal-related technical heritage.
- Sustainable growth of local large, small, medium, and micro enterprises in key sectors (e.g., electronics, metal and non-metal processing, glass) through inter-enterprise cooperation, mentoring, business model upgrades and productive investments.
- Dissemination of sustainable and circular business models and solutions at all levels and in all segments of enterprises, including alternative models of circular economy financing such as alternative banking, time banks, local currencies, and crowdfunding.
- Highly developed RDI and start-up ecosystem (including formal education, start-ups, larger companies, common equipment, common office space, increased incubator capacity, etc.).
- Investments in the Digitization of the Economy and Industry 4.0.
- Adapting to climate change in agriculture and industry.

Strategic objective 4: Utilization of the region's RES potential and efficient use of energy

Operational objectives addressed with the Territorial Just Transition Plan:

- Maximizing the use of solar potential that supplies both industry and households and preparing the site for the continuation of energy activity (change of use).
- Promoting energy efficiency and improving the energy and emission intensity of industry (e.g., increasing material efficiency, increasing energy efficiency in production processes, measures to reduce process emissions and emissions from fuel use, carbon capture and reuse measures, energy rehabilitation industrial buildings, reducing the need for mobility in non-productive work processes).
- Incentives for pilot projects to produce synthetic methane and hydrogen for industrial use, including in conjunction with the local system.

Strategic objective 5: Improved connectivity of the region

Operational objectives addressed with the Territorial Just Transition Plan:

- Improving intra-regional connectivity with sustainable transport solutions (e.g., increased use of rail, P + R, daily migration buses, e-mobility, bicycle exchange, etc.).

* Objectives “Not specifically covered by proposed operations” can still be covered later in the process, due to potential amendments based on the SEA and consultation with the stakeholder.

2.3 Consistency with other relevant national, regional, or territorial strategies and plans

Disclaimer: At this stage, only NECP and Slovenian Smart Specialisation Strategy are included. In the preparation of the TJTP, the relevant authority will update this section.

2.3.1 Compliance with the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP)

As an EU Member State, Slovenia had to prepare a National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) until 2030 and a Long-term strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The NECP is based on Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action and sets out objectives, policies, and actions in the five dimensions of the Energy Union by 2030, considering the long-term view (2040), including:

1. Decarbonisation;
2. Energy efficiency;
3. Energy security;
4. The internal market;
5. Research, innovation, and competitiveness.

As the coal phase-out is an extremely complex issue and plays an important role in achieving decarbonization, the NECP provides several different strategic and legal foundations. The NECP clearly states that to reduce the use of fossil energy sources and dependence on importing them, phasing out consumption of coal should take place by at least 30% by 2030, and that the decision to phase out coal consumption in Slovenia completely in line with the principles of just transition should be taken by 2021. In addition, the NECP foresees that a long-term national strategy, including a roadmap for a just plan for the early closure of the Velenje Coal Mine (PV) and the abandonment of coal at Šoštanj TPP, and the restructuring and development transition of the coal regions should be drawn up in 2020, followed by the law on the closure of the Velenje Coal Mine (PV) and a law on the restructuring of the region by 2021. It additionally says that the goal of abandoning the use of coal in Slovenia will be duly considered in the update of the NECP in 2024. Until 2030, the energy sector will still be mostly based on the use of a mix of primary sources from Slovenia, mainly RES and nuclear energy, and the use of domestic coal - lignite will be maintained.

2.3.2 Compliance with the Slovenian Smart Specialisation Strategy

RDI instruments will support national strategic development priorities and the associated focus areas and product directions, as defined in the Slovenian Smart Specialisation Strategy (hereinafter S4). The RDI instruments will also consider the horizontal priorities of S4 to ensure the transition to a circular (green) economy and Industry 4.0. with digitalization and instruments for strengthening the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem and the development of human resources or skills for smart specialization.

National strategic development priorities

Based on S4, national strategic development priorities were defined, where Slovenia has a critical mass of knowledge, capacities and competencies and comparative advantages, and thus the potential for positioning in global markets. National strategic development priorities dictate priority investments in the field of research, development, and innovation in Slovenia. Priorities were defined based on the development model of the quadruple helix, in partnership between the economy, knowledge institutions, other stakeholders and the state using the so-called entrepreneurial discovery process.

S4 defines three priority pillars and nine areas of the application associated with it with focus areas and technologies:

- I. Digital:
 - I.1 Smart cities and communities;
 - I.2 Smart buildings and home with a wooden chain;
- II. Circular:
 - II.1 Network for the transition to a circular economy;

- II.2 Sustainable food;
- II.3 Sustainable tourism;
- III. (S) Industry 4.0:
 - III.1 Factories of the future;
 - III.2 Health-medicine;
 - III.3 Mobility;
 - III.4. Materials as final products.

Areas of application with focus areas and technologies are further focused and concretized during the implementation of S4, based on cooperation between the country and the nine Strategic Development and Innovation Partnerships (SRIP). In their action plans, SRIPs define areas of joint development or niches. The action plans of the SRIPs are regularly upgraded and supplemented and thus represent a dynamic part of S4, through which a further focus process is also expected. For further focusing, the concretization of focus areas and technologies and implementation of public tenders in the field of research, development and innovation related to the implementation of S4, the Table of Priorities S4 and related focus areas and technologies is used, which is also the basis for applying selection criteria, which are bound to S4.

2.3.3 Slovenia's long-term climate strategy until 2050

The resolution on Slovenia's long-term climate strategy until 2050 (hereafter: DPS 2050) places the coal phase-out and other fossil fuels as one of the key sectors for decarbonising the energy supply sector, which also supports the decarbonisation of other sectors. According to the National Energy and Climate Plan (hereafter: NECP), the DPS 2050 envisages that the use of coal will be reduced by up to 30% by 2030 compared to 2005, after which coal will be exploited at only one location in Slovenia. In accordance with the NECP, it also states that Slovenia will adopt a timetable for the abandonment of coal use in the National Strategy for Transition from Coal of Slovenian Coal Regions by the end of 2021.

2.4 Gap analysis

In the transition from coal, the socio-economic transition on the regional level has not yet finished. The GDP and employment rates are both below the Slovenian average. The GDP per capita amounts to 53% of the national average, (compared to 73.6% in 2000), which makes Zasavje one of the poorest regions. Moreover, since 2013, **some 5,000 jobs have been lost in mining and mining related economic activities**. Today, most (approximately 50%) of the inhabitants commute daily to nearby cities for work due to **significant lack of employment opportunities in the region**, particularly in high value-added jobs.

Working population in municipalities of Trbovlje, Hrastnik, and Zagorje ob Savi was **25,936**. **Out of them 12,720 (or 49%)** commute out of those three municipalities. To compare, in 2010, the working population was **26,468 and 10,526 (or 40%)** was commuting. Therefore, over the last 10 year, there was an approximately 10 percentage point increase in the commuting of the working population. There is a clear trend in the increase of commuter, following the closure of the coalmine and thermal power plant. In conclusion, the transition from coal resulted in around **22.5 percentage less jobs in the region**. (approximately 2,500 jobs) (Source: SURS, 2021).

There were 125 small and 46 medium enterprises in Zasavje region in 2019 (SURS). Small enterprises employ from 10 to 49 people and medium enterprises employ 50 to 249 people. AJPES reports (2020) that in 2019, approximately 20% of the local workforce worked in micro companies, approximately 30% in small companies, and approximately 20% in medium companies. In 2019 13,717 people from Hrastnik,

Trbovlje, and Zagorje ob Savi also worked in those three municipalities. Simplifying this calculation, we can conclude, that approximately 70% of them worked in SMEs (approximately 9,600 people).

Considering the high unemployment rate and the need to create new jobs also for the less qualified workforce in the traditionally less entrepreneurial region, there is a low chance, that those jobs would be created only by the SMEs. Meaning, there is a need for the creation of alternative jobs, which would enable less commuting for those approximately 2,500 commuters that increased after the mine closure. Therefore, the financial support for the local large companies to create more jobs also regionally is much needed.

The data for the gap analysis was obtained from the Republic of Slovenia's Statistical Office and Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services. The used approach was discussed internally with Deloitte's professionals that helped direct the process obtaining the findings.

2.4.1 Reskilling and upskilling

With the closure of companies reliant on coal, there is a risk of a loss of talent from the region. This relates to highly skilled people e.g., engineers, who might no longer be able to find employment in their field in the region and will be forced to commute or migrate from the region to nearby hubs with a higher need for this level of skills such as Celje or Maribor, or even Ljubljana, where the majority of positions for highly skilled professionals are located. Professionals who previously worked in engineering or finance of power generation dependant on coal can be retrained to use that knowledge locally however for generation of energy from renewable and sustainable resources such as solar power.

Another group at risk is the elementary workforce that needs to be upskilled as there will be a demand for a different skillset following the phase out of the industry related to coal mining. Some of the workforce will be able to retire, however, for the younger generation, sufficient training has to be provided in order to not risk unemployment increase and equip the remaining workforce with skills that can fill the needs of new positions offered by large regional companies and those of local existing and future SMEs. To achieve that, dialogue with the companies will need to be established to ensure skills developed and funded are skills that will actually be needed in the region and not elsewhere.

The listed operations have to be further developed with reskilling and future job positions in mind, so new jobs are created with local workforce in mind and so that regional employment needs are met.

2.5 Types of operations envisaged

Disclaimer: The operations described in this chapter will serve as a foundation for the TJTPs, meaning they are not guaranteed to be able to access the Just Transition Fund. However, they are not yet approved by the national or EU authorities.

Strategic Objective 1: Quality living and natural environment

Operation 1: Regeneration and repurposing of land, degraded in coal-mining activities

Operation title	Regeneration and repurposing of land, degraded in coal-mining activities	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Public sector (municipalities)	Type of activity	Real estate

Synergies with other SI regions in transition	This operation is done on the regional real estate. The synergies can be created through knowledge-sharing, e.g., experience about land decontamination from Zasavje can be used in SAŠA region.
Operation description	This operation will include: • decontamination of areas, which were degraded in the coal mining activities, and • rehabilitation of those locations (to make them ready for future brownfield development on the locations Lakonca and Opekarna).
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	This operation considers the rehabilitation and repurposing of the land, which was used for coal-mining activities. It would enable the effective use of space, which is needed in the geographically limited area such as Zasavje. The operation's goal is to provide areas for brownfield investments of local enterprises into new production lines or in solar power plants, brownfield investment of municipalities into social infrastructure.
Response to development needs	• Promote harmonious spatial development with optimal utilization of spatially and environmentally degraded areas, while considering the geotechnical characteristics and stability of these areas • Ensure rehabilitation and exploitation of the potential of spatially and environmentally devalued industrial areas
Objectives addressed	• SO 1: Quality living and natural environment: ○ Making an evidence of all depreciated areas and their condition (extent, type and manner of depreciation, risk to the environment and human health), determination of future use of degraded areas, definition of the method and timeline of (spatial, environmental, and functional) remediation, completion of closures part and complete rehabilitation of areas related to coal mining and coal use. ○ Optimization of the use of space for the provision of economic activity.
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Strategy

Operation 2: Decommissioning and repurposing of coal-related infrastructure

Operation title	Decommissioning and repurposing of coal-related infrastructure	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Public sector (municipalities) and private sector (new investments)	Type of activity	Real estate, equipment
Synergies with other SI regions in transition	This operation is done on the regional real estate. The synergies can be created through knowledge-sharing, e.g., experience about industrial buildings renovation from Zasavje can be used in SAŠA region and vice versa.		
Operation description	This includes tearing down abandoned coal-related infrastructure, restoration, and revitalization of industrial heritage, conducting landscaping and civil engineering activities around such premises and providing sufficient municipal infrastructure for further economic repurposing of the location. Repurposing of buildings in degraded areas also includes equipping such buildings for their economical and R&D purposes aligned with the energy-efficient and circular economy principles. Specifically, two proposed areas for such activities will be: • Location of Trbovlje Thermal Power plant, which will be further repurposed to the technology park. • Location of OC Rudnik, which will be further repurposed to the business park for local SMEs.		

Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	This operation would enable the effective use of space, which was previously used for coal-mining activities. It is needed to provide areas for brownfield investments of local enterprises, many of them also planned as an operation in TJTP. Soft skill development is another component of this operation such as training the necessary workforce and raising awareness for the local population. A lot of the soft skill knowledge is already present in the region, however, the workforce with this skillset commutes to Ljubljana and other major cities. Operation 6 covers additional training and development intended to work in synergy with this operation.
Response to development needs	• Promote harmonious spatial development with optimal utilization of spatially and environmentally degraded areas, while considering the geotechnical characteristics and stability of these areas • Monitor and control spatially and environmentally degraded areas • Ensure rehabilitation and exploitation of the potential of spatially and environmentally devalued industrial areas
Objectives addressed	• SO 1: Quality living and natural environment: ○ Optimization of the use of space for the provision of economic activity. ○ Modern business and production centres needed to support key enterprises and their ecosystem (e.g., new warehouses, internal start-up / business incubators, offices, production, etc.). • SO 4: Utilization of the region's RES potential and efficient use of energy: ○ Maximizing the use of solar potential that supplies both industry and households and preparing the site for the continuation of energy activity (change of use).
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord, Mijwater

Operation 3: Improved care for the elderly previously employed in the coal mining sector through community care apartments

Operation title	Improved care for the elderly previously employed in the coal mining sector through community care apartments	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Private construction sector, and public sectors (elderly-care activities)	Type of activity	Real estate, provision of services to target groups
Synergies with other SI regions in transition	Possible synergies within knowledge-sharing activities (especially from the area of elderly care).		
Operation description	Brownfield and greenfield investments in the community care apartments, which will integrate senior-friendly housing with care services. The provided apartments will be energy efficient. Moreover, wherever possible, the investment will be done in brownfield infrastructure, especially in abandoned mine-related infrastructure. The apartments will be provided for the elderly previously directly or indirectly employed in the coal mining sector.		
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the	As there is not enough infrastructure for the growing number of the elderly in Zasavje, the infrastructure and related care programs in the region are essential. The potential investors (with relevant references) have already recognized the investment opportunities.		

climate transition	
Response to development needs	- Invest in the development of social infrastructure, providing the accommodation for vulnerable groups - Promote harmonious spatial development with optimal utilization of spatially and environmentally degraded areas, while considering the geotechnical characteristics and stability of these areas
Objectives addressed	- SO 1: Quality living and natural environment: - Providing quality programs for vulnerable groups such as the unemployed, those at risk of social exclusion, the elderly. - SO 2: Highly motivated and skilled citizens: - Caring for vulnerable groups and reducing social inequalities related to the challenges of coal mining (support for retired miners, especially the disabled and those injured in mining accidents, etc.).
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	/

Strategic objective 2: Highly motivated and skilled citizens

Operation 4: Supporting the development of regional entrepreneurship and innovation

Operation title	Supporting the development of regional entrepreneurship and innovation	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Private and public	Type of activity	Real estate, education, provision of services to target groups
Synergies with other SI regions in transition	Possible synergies with SAŠA region (e.g., with NGO accelerator)		
Operation description	Such efforts will include: - Establishing the centre for social innovations (including offices), which address the social issues, including circular economy, through promoting entrepreneurship and innovation in non-formal education, and consultancy services related to social innovation. - Establishing the regional platform for development and growth of SMEs with an emphasis on companies with the potential to grow. Through the mentorship schemes (incl. experts from practice, knowledge institutions and other networks), it would provide tailor-made consultations for entrepreneurs (including the topic of circular economy), help with administrative procedures, financial investments, and programs for HR competence development. The main goal is for the involved companies to become more competitive on the global market. The platform will include establishment of a network of regional promoters (e.g., very successful individuals and enthusiasts).		
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the	The region has a long history of coal mining. As miners had life-long stable job and good salary, the entrepreneurial mindset has not developed in the region. That is why two main efforts within this operation are addressing the development of entrepreneurship within the region, each from a different perspective.		

climate transition	The Centre for social innovation will be the entrepreneurial “entry point” as it will proactively support the entrepreneurial mind-set development of human capital and indirectly the development of new companies, addressing the topics of social innovation. The platform for the development and growth of regional SMEs will be the “entrepreneurial development point”, as it will proactively support the existing SMEs. It will be a know-how hub and tailor-made consultancy support for development of regional SMEs. It will consider sustainable transformation, administrative issues, and financial support for prospective SMEs. Seed funding facility for would-be entrepreneurs: Establishing a dedicated investment vehicle that funds entrepreneurial individuals, instead of individual enterprises (an example is Unconventional Capital which does this in Africa). This may help overcome entry thresholds for potential entrepreneurs by giving them space and time to explore ideas and innovate. In such seed funding facilities, the due diligence may focus on the entrepreneur and his mindset, instead of the enterprise and the business idea. This allows faster disbursement of funding in smaller portions, at lower cost for the investment facility.
Response to development needs	• Assure better availability of relevant knowledge and competencies, by strengthening links between research centres, educational institutions, and the business sector • Change the outdated mentality of a long-term job security into a more entrepreneurial mindset of the whole generation and providing more programs to promote entrepreneurial competences (especially early in the educational process) ensure further support and incentives for the start-up ecosystem in the region and incentives for investment in RDI.
Objectives addressed	• SO 1: Quality living and natural environment ○ Providing quality programs for vulnerable groups such as the unemployed, those at risk of social exclusion, the elderly. • SO 2: Highly motivated and skilled citizens: ○ Invest in supporting “mind-set change” activities, which improve entrepreneurial skills and mind-set, and affection to life-long learning and changes ○ Introduction of circular content into the system of formal and non-formal education. ○ Establishment of a network of regional promoters (e.g., very successful individuals and enthusiasts). • SO 3: A diversified and resilient regional economy: ○ Sustainable growth of local large, small, medium, and micro enterprises in key sectors (e.g., electronics, metal and non-metal processing, glass) through inter-enterprise cooperation, mentoring, business model upgrades and productive investments. ○ Dissemination of sustainable and circular business models and solutions at all levels and in all segments of enterprises, including alternative models of circular economy financing such as alternative banking, time banks, local currencies, and crowdfunding. ○ Highly developed RDI and start-up ecosystem (including formal education, start-ups, larger companies, common equipment, common office space, increased incubator capacity, etc.).
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	Across the country, Odisseu, GrowBiz, Senderos de Teja, Creetown Initiative, HappynHealthy

Operation 5: Centre for just transition of the Zasavje region

Operation title	Centre for just transition of Zasavje region	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Public and private	Type of activity	Education, provision of services to target groups, equipment and other tangible assets, real estate
Synergies with other coal region	Synergies with SAŠA region are possible.		
Operation description	The Centre will support the local community in its efforts to provide just transition for all segments of the affected society. Responsibilities of the Centre will include: (i) monitoring socio-economic parameters of just transitions process and report them to relevant agencies and the general public, (ii) provision of information on the just transition process to key audiences (i.e. citizens, project sponsors and key target groups, as well as the general public, (iii) implementation of successful foreign just transition practices into the local environment, (iv) providing a think-tank platform for different groups of just transition stakeholders, including through provision of relevant analyses required for effective and timely implementation of the Program and/or projects, and (v) support local stakeholders in their efforts to secure funding for their just transition projects and facilitating the implementation of the Plans (project office). The project office is the key function of the Centre for just transition, as it provides the following services to project sponsors: (i) establishment of local project partnerships and networking, (ii) training and capacity building for project sponsors, (iii) support in project preparation (support in developing project ideas, preparing applications, investment documentation, closing of financial structure of the projects, etc.). In performing its tasks, the Centre for just transition cooperates with all relevant stakeholder and structures within the partnership, particularly the Just Transition Advisory Committee (see partnership description under governance mechanism). With that, the region will improve its competencies in addressing just transition challenges such as the implementation of foreign successful practices, attracting/identifying different sources of financing, accelerating synergies between just transition regions and support dialogue between different levels of stakeholders (local, national, and European).		
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	Just transition will require close collaboration between various stakeholders and intense dialogue between local, national and EU stakeholders. In addition, the lack of local competencies to support the just transition process requires systematical development of knowledge and HR capabilities crucial for a sufficient just transition process.		
Response to development needs	• Attract investments for further development of industries such as forestry and wood industry, tourism, agriculture and food processing, future technologies, metal production and processing, and automotive industry • Increase local competences to finance projects through public funding and private investments (domestic and foreign direct investment)		
Objectives addressed	• SO 2: Highly motivated and skilled citizens:		

	Invest in supporting “mind-set change” activities, which improve entrepreneurial skills and mind-set, and affection to life-long learning and changes.
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	N/A

Operation 6: Implementation of the programs oriented toward skills development and employment possibilities in the region

Operation title	Implementation of the programs oriented toward skills development and employment possibilities in the region	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Public and private	Type of activity	Education, provision of services to target groups, equipment, and other tangible assets
Synergies with other coal region	Synergies with SAŠA are envisioned as Laboratory for the professions of the future and Centre for Virtual, Augmented and Mixed Reality will be based there.		
Operation description	This includes setting up (i) Laboratory for the professions of the future and (ii) Centre for Virtual, Augmented and Mixed Reality. Through such activities, the local environment will develop new segments of employment possibilities and competencies of local human resources, which will result in more resilient labour market, lower unemployment rates and a more diversified local economy. (i) Laboratory for the professions of the future will be implemented as a research and creative platform for critical thinking and solving of the current and future challenges related to employment possibilities and new professions within the local economy. Laboratory will support the local economy through training activities focused on the development of new technology-related skills and close collaboration with local companies in their processes of product and service development (through research, development, and innovation activities). Laboratory will also consist of creative projects, which will serve as a test platform (test before invest) for various entities from the real sector who will want to create toward more sustainable society. Through its activities, Laboratory will address different age groups (from children and young people to adults). (ii) Centre for Virtual, Augmented and Mixed Reality (Interactive Digital Centre) will provide knowledge transfer, education, training, research, development, prototyping and simulations capabilities for the use of Virtual, Augmented and Mixed Reality technologies in the local environment.		
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	Providing an environment that will support the local economy and the development of different professions is an important aspect of just transition. Within the region, various initiatives and projects have the potential to address such challenges from different ways. This operation is directly linked to the operation envisioned in SAŠA region (Implementation of the programs oriented toward skills development and employment possibilities in the region). The objective is to enable knowledge and projects transfer from both coal regions.		

Response to development needs	- Assure better availability of relevant knowledge and competencies, by strengthening links between research centres, educational institutions, and the business sector - Change the outdated mentality of a long-term job security into a more entrepreneurial mindset of the whole generation and providing more programs to promote entrepreneurial competences (especially early in the educational process) - Reskilling and upskilling of workers, who are currently unemployed due to the transition
Objectives addressed	- SO 2: Highly motivated and skilled citizens - Invest in supporting “mind-set change” activities, which improve entrepreneurial skills and mind-set, and affection to life-long learning and changes
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	Across the country, Odisseu, Senderos de Teja

Strategic objective 3: A diversified and resilient regional economy

Operation 7: Development of the aerospace industry

Operation title	Development of the aerospace industry	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Private (aerospace industry)	Type of activity	Real estate, manufacture, R&D
Synergies with other SI regions in transition	Possible synergies with SAŠA region		
Operation description	This operation will include two separated activities: - Establishing the centre for the research, development, and pilot-testing of new technologies in the aerospace industry; and - Investments in development and production of more environmentally friendly components and materials and promotion of the efficient use of materials in the aviation industry, and trainings infrastructure for the users of developed products (e.g., simulator of pilots).		
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	Due to the Zasavje region’s coal-mining history, there are many people with appropriate technical knowledge and experience. With minimal retraining, these professionals will be employed in a high-tech company in the aerospace industry. Moreover, companies from this industry are already successfully operating in the region. This operation will further increase their contribution to regional economic diversification and their contribution to the “green transition” of the aerospace industry.		
Response to development needs	- Assure better availability of relevant knowledge and competencies, in particular by strengthening links between research centres, educational institutions and the business sector Create high value-added jobs in the region; - Create greater employment opportunities in the region and thus less daily and permanent labour migration from the region; - Diversify the local economy in terms of sectoral and size diversity; - Invest in the further development of industries such as the electrical industry, new technologies (IT, space, and measurement technologies), production and processing of metals and non-metals, and agriculture in connection with self-sufficiency ensure		

	further support and incentives for the start-up ecosystem in the region and incentives for investment in RDI.
Objectives addressed	• SO 1: Quality living and natural environment: ○ Modern business and production centres needed to support key enterprises and their ecosystem (e.g., new warehouses, internal start-up / business incubators, offices, production, etc.) • SO 3: A diversified and resilient regional economy ○ Highly developed RDI and start-up ecosystem (including formal education, start-ups, larger companies, common equipment, common office space, increased incubator capacity, etc.). ○ Revitalization of the coal-related technical heritage. ○ Sustainable growth of local large, small, medium, and micro enterprises in key sectors (e.g., electronics, metal and non-metal processing, glass) through inter-enterprise cooperation
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	N/A

Operation 8: Investments into R&D departments and laboratories of propulsive local SMEs

Operation title	Investments into R&D departments and laboratories of propulsive local SMEs	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Private: electronic measuring devices, lighting, production of equipment for power plants	Type of activity	Real estate, equipment Indirectly: R&D, provision of services to target group, manufacture
Synergies with other SI regions in transition	Possible synergies with SAŠA region as similar operations are envisioned there.		
Operation description	Activities will include: • Investments into the new energy-efficient infrastructure for the research and development departments and laboratories in the electronic measuring devices and lighting industry • Investments into the infrastructure for the newly established Institute of Measurement Sciences & Audio-Visual Laboratory to support the development of regional electronic measuring devices industry • Investments into expanding production capacities and provide modern production equipment for the development and manufacturing of the equipment for hydroelectric power plants • Establishing and equipping the technology park (on the revitalized location of TET). It is envisaged to include the following contents: (a) manufacture of enclosures, electronic components and circuits, (b) test laboratories for testing measuring and other equipment; (c) additional location for start-up accelerator, (d) European Centre for Altitude Work, (e) exploration and energy exploitation of biomass - linked to new sustainability criteria which are expected to be further defined with the recast of RES Directive, expected in July 2021 - in degraded areas of the mine, (f) protection of technical heritage; (g) research, development and installation of a pilot model of electricity storage; and h) infrastructure for energy and heat production from RES The research would touch on research into different types of fast-growing biomass - linked to new sustainability criteria which are expected to be further defined with the		

	recast of RES Directive, expected in July 2021 -suitable for energy exploitation. Researchers would investigate the suitability of planting plants for different types of substrates present in different terrains on degraded minefields. This involves a few tens of hectares of land where fast-growing biomass - linked to new sustainability criteria which are expected to be further defined with the recast of RES Directive, expected in July 2021 - would be planted. • Partnership scouting and open innovation: establishing an agency to evaluate local SMEs' core capabilities and match those with large prospective corporate customers, which may have unmet needs that the local SMEs could support via RDI.
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	The propulsive local SMEs, which are the backbone of the region's economy after the mine closure, have many developmental ideas, however, their work area is not optimal. They need more office space (area in Zasavje is limited due to geography) and modernized equipment. Specifically, SMEs will be supported in three ways: • building new space for R&D and laboratories (primarily electronic measuring devices and lighting industries) • expanding production capacities and provide modern production equipment (primarily for production of equipment for power plants) • getting new technology park (on the abandoned thermal power plant)
Response to development needs	• Assure better availability of relevant knowledge and competencies, in particular by strengthening links between research centres, educational institutions and the business sector; • Change the outdated mentality of a long-term job security into a more entrepreneurial mindset of the whole generation and providing more programs to promote entrepreneurial competences (especially early in the educational process); • Create high value-added jobs in the region; • Create greater employment opportunities in the region and thus less daily and permanent labour migration from the region; • Invest in the further development of industries such as the electrical industry, new technologies (IT, space, and measurement technologies), production and processing of metals and non-metals, and agriculture in connection with self-sufficiency; • Promote harmonious spatial development with optimal utilization of spatially and environmentally degraded areas, while considering the geotechnical characteristics and stability of these areas.
Objectives addressed	• SO 1: Quality living and natural environment ○ Optimization of the use of space for the provision of economic activity. ○ Modern business and production centres needed to support key enterprises and their ecosystem (e.g., new warehouses, internal start-up / business incubators, offices, production, etc.). • SO 3: A diversified and resilient regional economy ○ Sustainable growth of local large, small, medium, and micro enterprises in key sectors (e.g., electronics, metal and non-metal processing, glass) through inter-enterprise cooperation, mentoring, business model upgrades and productive investments. ○ Highly developed RDI and start-up ecosystem (including formal education, start-ups, larger companies, common equipment, common office space, increased incubator capacity, etc.).
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	The Ludgate Hub, PISMA-NOVSKA Business incubator / DIHELP - DIH Enhanced Learning Programme

Operation 9: Research, development, and commercialization of carbon-free technologies

Operation title	Research, development, and commercialization of carbon-free technologies	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Public and private	Type of activity	Real estate, equipment, R&D, education, provision of services to target group
Synergies with other SI regions in transition	Synergies with SAŠA region are possible (e.g., know-how sharing).		
Operation description	This operation will include: • Investment into infrastructure (office space and laboratories) • Establishing a Centre for Development, Demonstration and Training for Carbon-Free Technologies, which will cover the following topics: • R&D activities (of materials, components and new systems); • Tests of the technology (pilot tests and demonstration), • Trainings • Project office		
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	Enterprises from Zasavje (and nationally) are trying to use carbon-free technologies. To achieve this, they need to connect with other (national) organizations in common R&D efforts. The Zasavje is a suitable location, where the centre would be established - because of its proximity to Ljubljana and historical presence of carbon-intensive industry (glass, coal, cement). The technologies developed will be used by the local (carbon-intensive) companies and by spin-off companies, which will have a direct positive influence on achieving the climate-neutrality (e.g., glass production).		
Response to development needs	• Create high value-added jobs in the region; • Create greater employment opportunities in the region and thus less daily and permanent labour migration from the region; • Ensure greater capacity of the business environment to attract public and private financing of companies (direct domestic and foreign investments); • Ensure further support and incentives for the start-up ecosystem in the region and incentives for investment in RDI.		
Objectives addressed	• SO 3: A diversified and resilient regional economy: ○ Sustainable growth of local large, small, medium, and micro enterprises in key sectors (e.g., electronics, metal and non-metal processing, glass) through inter-enterprise cooperation, mentoring, business model upgrades and productive investments. ○ Dissemination of sustainable and circular business models and solutions at all levels and in all segments of enterprises, including alternative models of circular economy financing such as alternative banking, time banks, local currencies, and crowdfunding. ○ Highly developed RDI and start-up ecosystem (including formal education, start-ups, larger companies, common equipment, common office space, increased incubator capacity, etc.). • SO 4: Utilization of the region's RES potential and efficient use of energy: ○ Promoting energy efficiency and improving the energy and emission intensity of industry (e.g., increasing material efficiency, increasing energy efficiency in production processes, measures to reduce process emissions and emissions from fuel use, carbon capture and reuse measures, energy		

	rehabilitation industrial buildings, reducing the need for mobility in non-productive work processes).
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	Cowocat_Rural

Operation 10: Establishment of a regional network of organizations conducting research and development of products for electrical installations in smart buildings, cities, e-mobility, and battery storage

Operation title	Establishment of a regional network of organizations conducting research and development of products for electrical installations in smart buildings, cities, e-mobility, and battery storage	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Private and public	Type of activity	R&D, provision of services to target groups, equipment
Synergies with other SI regions in transition	Synergies with SAŠA region are possible (e.g., know-how sharing).		
Operation description	This operation will include the establishment of a network from multiple organization, which will each do R&D activities to achieve the common objective of developing products for electrical installations in smart buildings, cities, e-mobility, and battery storage. Those activities will cover: • Products for electrical installations in smart buildings, • Products for power systems in smart cities and communities, • Research and development of products for battery systems in electric vehicles, • Research, development, and installation of a pilot model of electricity storage (on the revitalized TET location), • Development and research of gas sensors in industrial environments and large battery systems, • Battery Technology Training Centre and • System supply of renewable energy sources. This should be accompanied by the establishment of business service providers that can support the integrated rollout of the products mentioned above, both within the region and beyond.		
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	Regionally, there are a few enterprises, who are following similar R&D goals on the “future of energy”. In the field of electrical installations, smart buildings, smart cities, e-mobility, and battery storage. This operation will enable them to connect, supplement each other efforts and more effectively achieve their goals. It builds upon the existing know-how and supports region’s development, incl. alternative high-value jobs, which are not available after the mine closure.		
Response to development needs	• Diversify the local economy in terms of sectoral and size diversity; • Invest in the further development of industries such as the electrical industry, new technologies (IT, space and measurement technologies), production and processing of metals and non-metals, and agriculture in connection with self-sufficiency;		

	• Ensure greater capacity of the business environment to attract public and private financing of companies (direct domestic and foreign investments); • Ensure further support and incentives for the start-up ecosystem in the region and incentives for investment in research, development and innovation (hereinafter: RDI); • Increase capacity and energy storage capacity, including the development of hydrogen technologies and the use of batteries
Objectives addressed	• SO 3: A diversified and resilient regional economy: ○ Sustainable growth of local large, small, medium, and micro enterprises in key sectors (e.g., electronics, metal and non-metal processing, glass) through inter-enterprise cooperation, mentoring, business model upgrades and productive investments. ○ Highly developed RDI and start-up ecosystem (including formal education, start-ups, larger companies, common equipment, common office space, increased incubator capacity, etc.). • SO 4: Utilization of the region's RES potential and efficient use of energy: ○ Promoting energy efficiency and improving the energy and emission intensity of industry (e.g., increasing material efficiency, increasing energy efficiency in production processes, measures to reduce process emissions and emissions from fuel use, carbon capture and reuse measures, energy rehabilitation industrial buildings, reducing the need for mobility in non-productive work processes).
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	Creetown Initiative, Aragon Infoenergy Project

Operation 11: Investments in the industry 4.0 development of local industries (glass, electronic components, electrical products, bedding, lighting, metal processing industry)

Operation title	Investments in the industry 4.0 and automation of local industries (glass, electronic component, bedding, lighting, metal processing industry)	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Private (glass, electronic component, mattresses, lighting)	Type of activity	Real estate, equipment, manufacture
Synergies with other SI regions in transition	Synergies with SAŠA region are possible (e.g., know-how sharing).		
Operation description	This operation would accelerate the sustainable development of the local industries and help to achieve efficiency on all levels (use of materials, production processes, energy, etc.). Activities will include: • Greenfield investments in land preparation (Zasavje, Trbovlje, Hrastnik) • Construction of new automated factory, in-line with Industry 4.0, which will support the development and decarbonisation of glass industry and development of innovative foam solutions for the bedding industry, upholstery, automotive, aviation, etc. • Investments into the construction of new production lines (with modern equipment), which will support local lighting and electronic component industries		
Background information and the expected	Locally, there are already established enterprises, which need to invest in new, modern buildings/factories to optimize their business (incl. making it more sustainable). They wish to stay in the region, which is why they have already made investment plans. This operation will		

contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	not only support economic diversification, but also create much-needed jobs in the region. Moreover, improvement of production would also positively influence to achieving climate neutrality. An example is the development of innovative foam solutions; innovative foam products can reduce the use of foam for 50% and at the same time improve comfort of the product.
Response to development needs	• Create high value-added jobs in the region • Create greater employment opportunities in the region and thus less daily and permanent labour migration from the region • Diversify the local economy in terms of sectoral and size diversity
Objectives addressed	• SO 3: A diversified and resilient regional economy ○ Sustainable growth of local large, small, medium, and micro enterprises in key sectors (e.g., electronics, metal and non-metal processing, glass) through inter-enterprise cooperation, mentoring, business model upgrades and productive investments. ○ Dissemination of sustainable and circular business models and solutions at all levels and in all segments of enterprises, including alternative models of circular economy financing such as alternative banking, time banks, local currencies, and crowdfunding. ○ Investments in the Digitization of the Economy and Industry 4.0.
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	/

Operation 12: Development of wood industry in the region

Operation title	Development of wood industry in the region	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Private (wood industry)	Type of activity	Real estate, provision of services to target group, R&D
Synergies with other SI regions in transition	Possible synergies, as the similar operation is envisaged in SAŠA region.		
Operation description	Establishing the “wood centre”, which will include: • Woodworking machines for processing logs to the final wooden product, • Collection centre of old pieces of solid furniture that can be put back into use with minor processing and repair, • A research department to develop new sustainable technologies for materials reuse as well as new innovative uses and applications for wood, • A workplace for start-ups, which need to use woodworking machines.		
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	In Zasavje, there is a great need for a centre that had woodworking machines for processing logs to the final wooden product. Moreover, there is a need for mobile saws, wood dryers and wood finishing machines (CNC, cylindrical grinder, CNC grinder, edge glue, format saw, press). The centre would be a first step towards the development of the wood industry, which has great potential in the country in general. It contributes to climate neutrality, as it enables alternative natural resource – wood - to be used in different ways, recycled, and researched.		
Response to development needs	• Diversify the local economy in terms of sectoral and size diversity;		

	- Invest in the further development of industries such as the electrical industry, new technologies (IT, space and measurement technologies), production and processing of metals and non-metals, and agriculture in connection with self-sufficiency; - Ensure further support and incentives for the start-up ecosystem in the region and incentives for investment in research, development, and innovation.
Objectives addressed	- SO 3: A diversified and resilient regional economy: - Dissemination of sustainable and circular business models and solutions at all levels and in all segments of enterprises, including alternative models of circular economy financing such as alternative banking, time banks, local currencies, and crowdfunding. - Highly developed RDI and start-up ecosystem (including formal education, start-ups, larger companies, common equipment, common office space, increased incubator capacity, etc.).
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	Aragon Infoenergy Project

Strategic objective 4: Utilization of the region's RES potential and efficient use of energy

Operation 13: Developing infrastructure for green energy

Operation title	Developing infrastructure for green energy	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Public, Private (energy)	Type of activity	Real estate, equipment, provision of services
Synergies with other SI regions in transition	Synergies with SAŠA region are possible (e.g., know-how sharing).		
Operation description	RES infrastructure for energy and heat production will include, but is not limited to: Setting up the solar power plant The preferred locations for the activities will be at abandoned coal-mining-related areas, e.g., Trbovlje Thermal Power Plant and closed landfill for non-hazardous waste Prapretno (revitalized for solar power plant).		
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	In Zasavje, there is already existing know-how in the energy sector and energy infrastructure (previously used for coal mining and related activities), which will be repurposed for renewable energy technologies. The key potential can be recognized in solar energy. The energy created will be mainly used by businesses (to support their "green" transformation, which is needed for them to remain competitive). Additional energy will be used by local households.		
Response to development needs	- Improve air quality in the region and the fastest possible transition to clean and renewable energy sources - Promote harmonious spatial development with optimal utilization of spatially and environmentally degraded areas, while considering the geotechnical characteristics and stability of these areas - Assure a higher share of energy from renewable sources increase energy efficiency - Preserve and upgrade energy sites in the regions		
Objectives addressed	- SO 1: Quality living and natural environment - Making an evidence of all depreciated areas and their condition (extent, type and manner of depreciation, risk to the environment and human		

	health), determination of future use of degraded areas, definition of the method and timeline of (spatial, environmental, and functional) remediation, completion of closures part and complete rehabilitation of areas related to coal mining and coal use. ○ Optimization of the use of space for the provision of economic activity. • SO 4: Utilization of the region's RES potential and efficient use of energy ○ Maximizing the use of solar potential that supplies both industry and households and preparing the site for the continuation of energy activity (change of use). ○ Promoting energy efficiency and improving the energy and emission intensity of industry (e.g., increasing material efficiency, increasing energy efficiency in production processes, measures to reduce process emissions and emissions from fuel use, carbon capture and reuse measures, energy rehabilitation industrial buildings, reducing the need for mobility in non-productive work processes). ○ Providing affordable and RES-based district heating and cooling solutions
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	Mijnwater, Fintry development Trust, Emissions Zéro, Feldheim - energy self-sufficient village

Strategic objective 5: Improved connectivity of the region

This objective is partly covered by the Operation 13 (which is primarily addressing the Objective 2) and operation 15 (which is primarily addressing the Objective 3).

Operation 14: Research and development of technologies for production and storage of green hydrogen

Operation title	Research and development of technologies for production and storage of green hydrogen	Location	Zasavje
Sector	Public and private	Type of activity	Equipment, provision of service, R&D
Synergies with other SI regions in transition	Synergies with SAŠA region are possible (e.g., know-how sharing).		
Operation description	The activities within this operation will include setting up devices for the production of electricity from solar energy (related to operation 12 – setting the solar power plant), storage of surplus electricity in the form of green hydrogen and its use for cogeneration of electricity and heat and the needs of public transport.		
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	The operation would make use of ex-coal mining areas that are degraded or not suitable to be used differently (e.g., ash dumps, roofs of industrial facilities, etc.). Green hydrogen produced will partially replace natural gas with CHP plants for district heating, which will reduce CO ₂ emissions. The hydrogen produced will also be used as a fuel in local transport buses and utility trucks would help reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions in transport. Moreover, will be also an R&D operation, to help the involved regional organization to gain knowledge and references.		
Response to development needs	• Assure a higher share of energy from RES • Increase capacity and energy storage capacity, including the development of hydrogen technologies and the use of batteries • Preserve and upgrade energy sites in the regions		

	Improve air quality in the region and the fastest possible transition to clean and renewable energy sources
Objectives addressed	- SO 4: Utilization of the region's RES potential and efficient use of energy - Maximizing the use of solar potential that supplies both industry and households and preparing the site for the continuation of energy activity (change of use). - Promoting energy efficiency and improving the energy and emission intensity of industry (e.g., increasing material efficiency, increasing energy efficiency in production processes, measures to reduce process emissions and emissions from fuel use, carbon capture and reuse measures, energy rehabilitation industrial buildings, reducing the need for mobility in non-productive work processes). - Incentives for pilot projects for the production of synthetic methane and hydrogen for industrial use, including in conjunction with the local system. - Providing affordable and RES-based district heating and cooling solutions. - SO 5: Improved connectivity of the region - Improving intra- and extra-regional connectivity with sustainable transport solutions (e.g., increased use of rail, P + R, daily migration buses, e-mobility, bicycle exchange, etc).
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	Emissions Zéro, Feldheim - energy self-sufficient village

Operation 15: Investments in digitalization of production and logistics processes

Operation title	Investments in digitalization of production and logistics processes	Location	Zasavje and SAŠA
Sector	Public and private	Type of activity	Intangible assets, provision of services to target groups
Synergies with other SI regions in transition	Possible synergies with SAŠA region, especially for public sector digitalization activities.		
Operation description	Establishing regional and intra-regional business networks for digitalization to efficiently tackle the common issues (e.g., digitalization of logistics, digitalization of public sector).		
Background information and the expected contribution to alleviate the impact of the climate transition	Existing companies from different industries (therefore not a competition) are facing similar problems as regards digitalization activities (e.g., logistics and manufacturing). They will connect and create the common solution, which can be used by all. Similarly, municipalities are facing the same challenges as regards digitalization. In collaboration with local business, the solution, which can be used by all will be developed. This operation will work as enabler/ catalyst for other operations. Its main goal is to strengthen the capabilities of the business and public organizations in the region.		
Response to development needs	- Diversify the local economy in terms of sectoral and size diversity - Invest in the further development of industries such as the electrical industry, new technologies (IT, space, and measurement technologies), production and processing of metals and non-metals, and agriculture in connection with self-sufficiency - Ensure greater capacity of the business environment to attract public and private financing of companies (direct domestic and foreign investments)		

	• Ensure further support and incentives for the start-up ecosystem in the region and incentives for investment in research, development, and innovation
Objectives addressed	• SO 3: A diversified and resilient regional economy ○ Dissemination of sustainable and circular business models and solutions at all levels and in all segments of enterprises, including alternative models of circular economy financing such as alternative banking, time banks, local currencies, and crowdfunding. ○ Investments in the Digitization of the Economy and Industry 4.0.
Benchmarking cases/examples (per Appendix III)	The Ludgate Hub

2.6 Specific conditions of support under the Just Transition Fund Regulation

For enterprises other than SMEs, productive investments should only be supported if they are necessary for mitigating job losses resulting from the transition, by creating or protecting a significant number of jobs, and do not lead to or result from relocation. Investments in existing industrial facilities, including those covered by the Union Emissions Trading System, should be allowed if they contribute to the transition to a climate-neutral economy of the Union by 2050 and go substantially below the relevant benchmarks established for free allocation under Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁴ and if they result in the protection of a significant number of jobs. Any such investment should be justified accordingly in the relevant territorial just transition plan.

In the preparation of the TJTP, the relevant authority will update the section of the territorial just transition plan, depending on the decision to provide such support.

3. Governance mechanisms

Disclaimer: The governance mechanism described in this chapter is a proposal. It has not been approved by any authorities yet.

3.1 Partnership

3.1.1 Stakeholder engagement

In the push towards open and inclusive policymaking and governance processes, decision-makers increasingly recognise the importance and the benefits of involving stakeholders in the process. Policymakers are stepping up efforts to underpin all their initiatives with solid evidence, and to involve those who will ultimately be affected by policy decisions. Stakeholder consultation envisaged broad and inclusive interaction between the decision-maker and those potentially impacted through collecting input and feedback from citizens and stakeholders whereby the decision-makers proactively seek evidence (facts, views, opinions) on a specific issue. The process is used to gain insight into the values, goals, and preferences of stakeholders, while promoting their buy-in into the policymaking and thereby help to legitimise the analysis and the resulting decisions.

An important aspect of the just transition is **not only the ability for stakeholder engagement but their proactive role**. We encouraged all main stakeholders to take the initiative and actively participate in both

⁴ Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 2003 establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community and amending Council Directive 96/61/EC (OJ L 275, 25.10.2003, p. 32).

the analytical and programming parts of the assignment. All stakeholder needed to be proactive in formulating and driving agenda themselves because risk fall-back options are defensive strategies to preserve a given status quo, which usually do not work. That is why our methodology was built around **inclusion and constant feedback loop**.

The stakeholder's engagement consisted of three parts: (A) identification of (key) stakeholders and stakeholder's mapping, (B) involving and (C) informing the stakeholders (see Figure below). The main difference between the latest two is in active two-way social dialogues. For example, only key stakeholders were involved through interviews and workshops (e.g., coal mine director, the mayor, the headmaster of local school etc.), however, the public was informed through the online platform (Portal-Energetika) and news. The figure below shows that each part of the stakeholders' engagement strategy is realised by using the different tools.

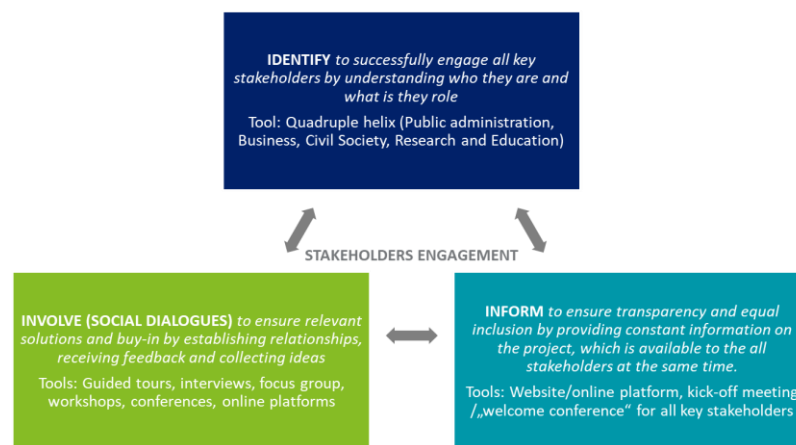


Figure: Stakeholder engagement triangle

STEP 1: Identification of (key) stakeholders and stakeholder mapping

The first step screened the organizational landscape and identified the players within and outside of the regions which: (i) Have the capacity to drive the process of programming and implementation of TJTP; (ii) Are in and outside of main interest groups, thus being able to contribute new and alternative ideas; (iii) Can bridge across sectoral boundaries and (iv) Can link to sources of expertise, knowledge, or markets outside the region.

Stakeholder mapping was based on a 3-step approach: (i) Identifying stakeholders and gauging their responsibilities and expectations prioritization in terms of power; (ii) Prioritizing stakeholders in terms of their power and engagement; and (iii) Mapping stakeholders in accordance with the gathered understanding of their role in the ecosystem. We used **quadruple helix**, which is a 4-categories diagram. Under these categories, we identified the following stakeholders:

- **Academia, Research & Education:** The Velenje Educational centre (Šolski center Velenje) and its secondary and higher education programs, Trbovlje Secondary Technical and Vocational School (Srednja tehniška in poklicna šola Trbovlje), People University of Velenje (Ljudska univerza Velenje), People University of Zasavje (Zasavska Ljudska univerza, the Jožef Stefan Institute).
- **Government and Public administration (incl. EU institutions):** Regional Development Agencies (incl. Razvojna agencija Savinjsko-Šaleške regije, Regionalna razvojna agencija Zasavje), Ministry of

Infrastructure, Ministry of Economic Development and technology, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, Ministry of Finance, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social affairs, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Employment service of Slovenia (Regional Service Trbovlje and Regional Service Velenje), DG Reform, DG EMPL, DG REGIO, DG ENER, DG CLIMA, and DG ENV.

- **Industry, business and business support environment:** Regional Chambers of commerce and Industry (Zasavska gospodarska zbornica, Savinjsko-Šaleška gospodarska zbornica), Regional units of Chamber of Commerce and Chamber of Small Crafts, Municipalities from Šaleška and Zagorje regions, Slovenian Powerplants Holding (HSE), Šoštanj Thermal Power Plant (TEŠ), Coal Mine Velenje, Energy Company Trbovlje (EDT-HSE), SAŠA Incubator, Katapult, key employers in the region (e.g. Gorenje Hisense, BSH, Plastika Skaza, ETI, Dewesoft, Steklarna Hrastnik, Mega M, Turna) Slovene Enterprise Fund, Slovenian promotional Development Bank (SID Bank), etc.
- **Civil society (incl. workers):** Labour unions representatives (incl. Sindikat delavcev dejanosti energetike slovenije, SPESS sindikat Premogovnik Velenje, and SDRES), NGOs (Focus– Društvo za sonaravni razvoj, Mladi za podnebno pravičnost, Šaleško EKO gibanje, Greenpeace...)

Moreover, two working groups have already been established before: (1) a **high-level working group** established by the government (to decide upon the timeline for closing down the CMV and coal phase-out goals by the end of 2020); and (2) an **operational working group** (consists of representatives of ministries, municipalities, energy companies, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, regional development agencies and the GZS) established by MZI, which helps the governmental working group with concrete tasks and deliverables. We have met with the Operational working group and mutually agreed to collaborate in the process.

STEP 2: Involving

The actual involvement of the stakeholders was done through **social dialogues** or **stakeholder engagement process**, which included individual virtual consultations, workshops and project idea gathering through online form.

- First round of idea gathering until November 20th, 2020.
- The ideas were checked, and the initial feedback was presented at four online workshops on December 21st and 22nd, 2020 (divided by public/private sector and by SAŠA/Zasavje region).
- Second round of idea gathering went on until January 7th, 2021. Over 100 project ideas were collected.
- All applied forms with project ideas were then assessed and prioritized in two rounds (based on different criteria presented in Appendix 1). The stakeholders were informed on the grade, which their project idea received through the email.
- Based on the highly rated project ideas, the operations were created. Those operations were shared with the stakeholders and presented to them during an online workshop that took place on March 29th, 2021. Their feedback on the proposed operations was collected until April 9th, 2021.

STEP 3: Informing stakeholders

Apart from the formal involvement of stakeholders, a so-called **community-led development (CLD)** approach was also deployed to enable working with the wider communities outside the realm of formal list of stakeholders. This part of the project particularly focused on giving certain control to the entire local communities, which was primarily implemented via online consultation (Portal Energetika), where all key information on the project progress were published. Additionally, the informing took place in the form of previously described workshops.

3.1.2 Proposed partnership structure for TJTP

The partnership structure for TJTPs follows the partnership and governance mechanism established under the National Strategy for Transition from Coal of Slovenian Coal Regions, further supplemented by the Just Transition Governance Body (i.e., a designated body with delegated tasks within the Management & Control system of Cohesion policy) and an ad-hoc support mechanism performed via special operation titled “Centre for Just transition in SAŠA region” (outside the governance mechanism, but an enabler of the transition process).

The proposed approach combines a top-down approach (i.e., main responsibility for adopting the main decisions stays at the national level) and a bottom-up approach (i.e., implementation of the plans and core processes performed at the regional level). This hybrid approach is composed of the following structures:

1. A joint **Just transition coordination body** shall be established for both regions at the level of geographically competent development agencies, each contributing a proportionate number of resources for the tasks described below. The following tasks are delegated to the coordination body to enable a smooth, efficient, and effective implementation of the Plans: (i) Preparing and publishing of calls for proposals, including design of selection criteria. (ii) First-stage appraisal of applications (assessment of the relevance and quality of applications). (iii) Monitoring and evaluation of operations funded under the Plans (independently and/or in collaboration with independent evaluators). (iv) Information and publicity measures related to the implementation of the Plans. (v) Management of regional partnerships through formalized partnership agreements with key stakeholders from the local/regional environment (see list of relevant stakeholders under the composition of Operational Working Group above). This will ensure adequate participation of regional stakeholders in the governance processes and their commitment to contribute resources and engage according to their role and capacity.
2. In addition to delegated tasks, the Just transition coordination body also establishes two independent **Centres for Just Transition** in each of the regions (see description of operations for more details).
3. To ensure ongoing social dialogue with a wider range of local and regional stakeholders, a **Just Transition Advisory Committee** (also formalized within the partnership agreement described under the Just transition coordination body) is formed as a voluntary body assisting and advising the Governance Bodies. The participation in the Committee is open for everyone, however, applicants must ensure genuine interest in the nomination process (the criteria to be set by the Governance Body, membership approved by the Operational Working Group).

Outside of this system are other **financers** and **project sponsors**, which coordinate via the project office at the Just Transition Governance Body, which assists the project sponsors in drafting project applications. These interactions are directly related to the implementation of the measures / projects under the Strategy and relevant implementation plans. Financers are among other things also responsible for the regularity and legality of funding in accordance with their rules.

3.2 Proposed monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the territorial just transition plan (TJTP) represents a great challenge from the point of view of continuity and coordinated pursuit of all goals, as their achievement is likely to be influenced by various external factors. It is therefore crucial that the Just transition coordination body has sufficient capacity to perform its monitoring and evaluation function. TO this end, the body will:

- Develop a detailed evaluation plans, covering the entire programming period (should be aligned with wider Evaluation plans prepared by the Managing Authority);
- Set-up a taskforce for monitoring and evaluation and ensure it has adequate capacity to perform on going monitoring and implement the evaluation plan;
- Develop a toolbox of evaluation practices for simple evaluation tasks, as well as designate which parts of evaluation will be outsourced to independent providers;
- Establish ongoing monitoring mechanisms and tools to collect data on implementation of projects;
- Make sure its sets partnership agreements in a way these can be utilized for monitoring purposes.

Furthermore, the monitoring function shall also observe the overall process of coal phase out in line with the National Strategy. Should the overall transition process deviate from the predicted trajectory, thus endangering the key enabling conditions for a successful transition, the coordination body will and react accordingly (i.e., trigger the need to revise the Plans).

3.3 Proposed coordination and monitoring body/bodies

The operational coordination at the regional level will take place within the regional Partnership agreements between the Just Transition coordination body and regional stakeholders. The coordination at the national level will take place within the designated just transition bodies (High-level Working Group and Operational Working Group).

The main tasks of the Just transition coordination body will be performed based on a delegation agreement with the Managing Authority. The accreditation process as well as ongoing assurance and control of the performance of these tasks will be performed by the Managing Authority. The Just transition coordination body will not assume any control (administrative or financial) or audit functions in performing its tasks.

4. Appendices

Disclaimer: Appendices I and II included some confidential information, which was adapted before being made public.

List of Appendices:

I. Projects long list

II. Projects short list

III. Benchmarking projects

I. Projects long list

All stakeholders were invited to propose project ideas. We initially received 103 project ideas, which were collected through two stages:

- Analytical hierarchy process (AHP)
- Just transition fund eligibility

AHP was done in a way, that each of the project ideas was put into one of the four categories (environment, economy, human resources and social infrastructure, or energy) to achieve comparability of different project ideas projects.

Then, each project was assessed by the following criteria:

- Number of regions addressed
- Types of project partners involved (public, corporate, civil society, academia)
- Relevance of project partners (i.e., roles of each partner clearly defined and aligned with the purpose and objectives of the project)
- Number of development needs of the region from the draft Strategy clearly addressed
- Project is coal-related (the description of the project clearly addresses the challenges associated with coal mining)
- Project supports start-ups or scale-up activities of SMEs in the region
- Funding eligibility as per article 4 of the draft JTF regulation (number of areas addressed)
- Location in the narrower area of influence (Zasavje - municipalities Zagorje ob Savi, Trbovlje Hrastnik; SAŠA - municipalities Šmartno ob Paki, Šoštanj, Velenje)
- Clear indication of industry-specific best available technologies / state-of-the-art technologies
- Number of just transition elements addressed (energy, environment, HR, and economy), directly by the project or in connection to related projects (clear links established in the project idea)
- Alignment with Strategy 2030 clearly visible
- Alignment with Smart Specialization Strategy clearly visible
- Alignment with other national and/or territorial strategies presented
- Alignment with the Integrated national energy and climate plan
- Likely contribution to the objectives of the National Energy and Climate Plan and the Long-term Climate Strategy until 2050
- Alignment of project objectives with draft Strategy objectives
- Adequacy of objectives (SMART objectives)
- Adequacy of measurement framework (RACER specific KPIs)
- In relation to RCR 01: Number of jobs created as % of cumulative number of employees of all project consortium partners
- In relation to RCR 02: Leverage effect measured as total project value divided by predicted JTF contribution
- In relation to RCR 03, 04, 05, 06: Innovation support potential
- In relation to RCR 29a, 26, 29: Estimated annual greenhouse-gas emissions from the investment (increased/reduced)
- In relation to RCR 11, 12: Contribution to digitalization (automation, AI, big data, predictive maintenance...)
- In relation to RCR 97, 98: Contribution to linking labour market and job seekers

- In relation to RCR 31, 32: Total renewable energy produced (electricity, heat)
- In relation to RCR 47, 48, 49: Annual tons of waste treated/processed
- In relation to RCR 46, 62, 50: Population directly benefiting from the project
- In relation to RCR 52: Rehabilitated land
- In relation to RCR 200, 201, 202, 203: Expected number of target group participants addressed
- Green potential of the project
- Climate proofing
- Final recipients of the benefits project
- Project maturity
- Alignment of the project timeline with JTF eligibility period(s)
- Adequacy of risk mitigation plan (non-generic, project-specific risks identified in key areas: financial risks (incl. economic risks), operational risks, compliance risks)
- Realistic and reasonably granulated revenue streams
- Realistic and reasonably granulated cost items
- Project value
- Alignment of the financing structure with the timeline and project financials
- Combination of with pillar II and III of JTM predicted
- Grant financing need clearly justified
- Share of JTF grant financing as % of total project
- Adequacy of Project Management framework (team size, PM role, distribution of tasks, project organization)
- Adequate credentials of the project sponsor (experience with similar projects / Investments)
- Adequate experience and credentials of the project team

Later, the projects in the same category were compared by applicable criteria. The result of the AHP exercise was the list with the ranked projects by category, which served as an orientation of the project impact.

Not all project ideas were eligible for JTF, thus each project was later graded based on the following criteria:

- Timeline (2027+2)
- Strategic priority
- JTF area eligibility within European Commission program guidelines

There were 4 possible grades (A, B, C, D), which are explained below.

Grade or sign	Meaning of the grade	Explanation
A	JTF compliant project idea	Project idea compliant with (i) 2027 + 2 timetable, (ii) strategic priorities and (iii) European Commission program guidelines. The project idea is included in the priority set of projects based on which Regional Plans of the Just Transition Fund are being prepared.

B	JTF compliant project idea with constraints	The project idea is either not in line with (a) the 2027 + 2 timetable or is not fully compatible with (b) the strategic priorities and (c) the program guidelines of the European Commission. The project idea is included in the secondary set of projects
C	JTF inconsistent project idea with strategic importance	From the point of view of the Just Transition Fund, the project idea is not in line with the program guidelines of the European Commission. Due to the recognized strategic importance for the development of the region, it is necessary to identify other sources of financing the project idea.
D	JTF inconsistent project idea with unrecognized strategic potential	Project idea excluded from further programming process
!	Funding and/or project idea's maturity are not clear	
*	Only one part of the project idea eligible	

Long list of projects below includes projects ideas graded "A" and "B".

Disclaimer: The long-listed projects below were included in the operations suggested above, however, this does not guarantee that they will be treated as a priority project. Some of the information was withheld due to confidentiality reasons.

Project idea name	Project idea grade
Decommissioning of the main technological equipment and removal of facilities at the location of TPP Trbovlje, in an environmentally acceptable manner by selecting all hazardous substances and waste generated during decommissioning	A
Craft zone Rudnik renovation of buildings and construction of a solar power plant	A
Sustainable green-field factory according to the latest industry standards 4.0 for locally established large enterprise	A
Pilot Demonstration Center for Low Carbon Technologies	A
Community care apartments Hrastnik with energy self-sufficiency	A
Solar power plant	A
Investments in the restoration and decontamination of "brownfield" areas, soil remediation for use and, if necessary, the inclusion of "greenfield" infrastructure: Renovation, soil remediation and the establishment of the Lakonca Craft and Industrial Zone	A
Thermal treatment of municipal sludge	A
Sava Technology Park	A
Development of technology for the production and storage of green hydrogen	A
Investments in restoration and decontamination, soil remediation and land preparation: - Soil preparation and projects for the Opekarna area	A
Social HUB - Centre for Social Innovations Zasavje	A
Investment in modern technological equipment for the development and manufacture of equipment for hydroelectric power plants	A
Investment in community care apartments Trbovlje	A

Strengthening the aviation industry in the region - new high value-added jobs.	A
Digitized, automated and robotic foam processing plant according to industry principles 4.0.	A
Research and development of products for electrical installations in smart buildings, cities, e-mobility, and battery storage of electricity	A
Supporting business growth - A platform for SME development and growth	A
Community Care Apartments	A
Construction of community care apartments in Izlake	A
Aerospace and Defence Centre	A!
Centre for Development, Demonstration and Training for Carbon-Free Technologies	A!
Development - Production Incubation Centre	A!
Wood centre	A!
A fair transition from coal to the universe of science, shift «Coal» = Universe / Science	A*
Hydroelectric Power Plant	B
Comprehensive arrangement of the Ojstro Hrastnik area	B
Restoration, soil remediation and establishment of the "Park of All Generations Kipe"	B
Revitalization of rehabilitated areas by arranging a multi-purpose space for intergenerational socializing	B
Regenerative hybrid glass furnace	B
Transition to renewable fuels in glass production	B
Rehabilitation of land for arranging green sports and recreational areas along the Kotredeščica riverbed in Zagorje ob Savi	B
"Purfl Magazine" (change of purpose and revitalization of abandoned mining tunnels - tourism)	B
Renovation and revitalization of garden zones in the municipality of Trbovlje	B
Cleaning of the mine shaft of the Sitarjevec mine for new opportunities	B
Arrangement and establishment of garden zones in Hrastnik	B
Business incubator of "Mat'kurja" Zagorje ob Savi	B
Digitization and modernization of intra-logistics processes in Zasavje companies	B
A new generation of automation and digitization of the process of production of switchgear	B

II. Projects short list

Disclaimer: The short-listed projects below were included in the operations suggested above, however, this does not guarantee that they will be treated as a priority project. Some of the information was withheld due to confidentiality reasons.

Shortlist of projects below includes five selected project ideas with the grade “A”. In addition, the project's maturity, project's impact, European Commission’s programme guidelines, and balanced representation of different just transition pillars (energy, HR, economy, and environment) were also considered in the shortlisting process.

1.

Project name	Sustainable green-field factory according to the latest industry standards 4.0	Location	Zasavje
Project description	The project would be undertaken by a large enterprise and it is aimed to support further growth and development of more sustainable packaging production in Zasavje. The Zasavska region is currently an industrially degraded region with the lowest GDP in the country. The project holder has an interest in the construction of a new smart factory (Industry 4.0) in the local area, owned by the municipality, in the period from 2023 to 2027. The new plant would provide approximately 200 new jobs in the first phase. However, there are several further development phases with up to 500 new jobs. The plant will contribute to the positive economic development of the region. Project holder’s excellent business results in combination with specialization increased productivity, digitalization, specialization in the manufacture of premium products and increased consumption of packaging glass in the global market due to growing market share, are the driving force for setting up new production capacities.		
Project relevance (development needs addressed)	- Reducing the risk of dependence on energy imports; - Increased security of regional energy supply; - Increase the share of energy from renewable energy sources; - Creation of high-value added jobs in the region; - Increase of employment possibilities in the region and with this reduce the daily work migrations from the region; - Further support and encouragement of region’s start-up ecosystem and incentives for investment in research, development, and innovation.		
Estimated project implementation (project holder, timeline)	Project holder: Large enterprise Project partners: More than 10 project partners, from private and public sector Timeline: 2023 - 2027		
Estimated cost and possible sources of financing	Project value: XXX EUR Proposed financing: 40% JTF 30% grants 30% project partner’s investments		
Project maturity (1- Conceptual design, 2- Studies and financial analysis performed, 3 - Financial	2		

structure & permits obtained)	
Estimated economic, social, and environmental impact on the region (Incl. job creation)	- Approximately 200 new jobs in the first phase, later up to 500 new jobs. - Efficient use of resources. Their product would be a packaging, which is sustainable. - Development of one of the key local enterprises.

2.

Project name	Pilot Demonstration Centre for Low Carbon Technologies (TRL 5-8)	Location	Zasavje
Project description	The project proposal is an initiative to create an ecosystem that will allow for a fair and inclusive transition of sectors to carbon neutrality. The initiative is based on the establishment of a pilot demonstration centre (PDC) for low-carbon technologies located in local area. PDC represents an environment in which it is possible at the pilot level, in so-called "valley of death" size (TRL 5-8), to develop and test key low-carbon and circular economy technologies for Slovenia, which are listed below with individual pilot projects. Individual projects would last 3-5 years and would be replaced upon completion by new projects incorporating even more advanced technologies. The purpose of such pilot projects is to raise the technological maturity of new and innovative technologies to a sufficiently high level that they can then be used in larger demonstration projects in commercial implementation (TRL9). This would reduce the risk of implementing new technologies that otherwise allow significantly lower carbon footprints than traditional ones. PDC would bring together various stakeholders at regional and national level who want to develop, implement, market, and enable the transition to such technologies: public and private research organizations, RDI companies and agencies, formal and non-formal education institutions, intensive producers LPG and industrial companies, system infrastructure and start-up companies.		
Project relevance (development needs addressed)	- Reducing the risk of dependence on energy imports; - Increase the share of energy from renewable energy sources; - Increased energy storage capacity, including the development of hydrogen technologies and the use of batteries; - Improvement of local educational system and meeting the needs of local employers by expanding the offer of formal education programs (tertiary education) and strengthening the link between research, education, and the real sector; - Better availability of relevant knowledge - strengthening the link between research, educational institutions, and the real sector; - Change of the historical mind-set of "life-long job safety" into more entrepreneurial mind-set of the whole generation and more programs promoting entrepreneurial-skills are needed (especially in early schooling); - Creation of high value added jobs in the region; - Increase of employment possibilities in the region and with this reduce the daily work migrations from the region; - Improve diversification of local economy and increase the number of spin-off companies present in the region; - Attract investments for further development of industries such as forestry and wood industry, tourism, agriculture and food processing;		

	• Future technologies, metal production and processing, and automotive industry; • Further support and encouragement of region's start-up ecosystem and incentives for investment in research, development, and innovation.
Estimated project implementation (project holder, timeline)	Project holder: Local development centre, Project partners: Timeline: 2021 - 2026
Estimated cost and possible sources of financing	Project value: XX EUR Proposed financing: 65% JTF 20% project partners investments 15% grants
Project maturity (1- Conceptual design, 2- Studies and financial analysis performed, 3 - Financial structure & permits obtained)	2- 3 - Some ideas are more developed than others, 2 is "medium number"
Estimated economic, social, and environmental impact on the region (Incl. job creation)	Approximately 40 jobs created, 10+ patents, 10 start-ups, innovation potential, potential for reduced CO ₂ .

3.

Project name	Sava Technology Park	Location	Zasavje
Project description	The project for the construction of the Sava Technology Park includes a degraded area within the Trbovlje thermal power plant and upgrades the demolition activities of the buildings of the former TET complex, which will be revitalized. The objective is to upgrade the joint activities that are a continuation of the demolition of buildings with the Technology Park, which would create content related to the needs of the region. These contents are: 1. Manufacture of enclosures, electronic components, and circuits. 2. Test laboratories for testing measuring and other equipment. 3. Start-up incubator - additional location. 4. European Centre for Altitude Work. 5. Exploration and energy exploitation of biomass - biomass linked to new sustainability criteria which are expected to be further defined with the recast of RES Directive, expected in July 2021 - in degraded areas of the mine. 6. Protection of technical heritage. 7. Other content.		
Project relevance (development needs addressed)	• Increasing energy efficiency; • Preservation and upgrade of energy locations in the regions; • Better availability of relevant knowledge - strengthening the link between research, educational institutions and the real sector; • Change of the historical mind-set of "life-long job safety" into more entrepreneurial mind-set of the whole generation and more programs promoting entrepreneurial-skills are needed (especially in early schooling);		

	• Creation of high-value added jobs in the region; • Increase of employment possibilities in the region and with this reduce the daily work migrations from the region; • Improve diversification of local economy and increase the number of spin-off companies present in the region; • Attract investments for further development of industries such as forestry and wood industry, tourism, agriculture and food processing; future technologies, metal production and processing, and automotive industry; • Increase local competences to finance projects through public funding and private investments (domestic and foreign direct investment); • Further support and encouragement of region's start-up ecosystem and incentives for investment in research, development, and innovation; • Rehabilitation and exploitation of the potential of degraded industrial areas, both for residential and industrial purposes as well as for tourism and recreation.
Estimated project implementation (project holder, timeline)	Project holder: local enterprise Project partners: Public and private Timeline: 2021 - 2026
Estimated cost and possible sources of financing	Project value: XX EUR Proposed financing: 50% JTF Project partners investments Other EU grants Project income
Project maturity (1- Conceptual design, 2- Studies and financial analysis performed, 3 - Financial structure & permits obtained)	1
Estimated economic, social, and environmental impact on the region (Incl. job creation)	Approximately 30 jobs created, innovation potential, potential for reduced CO ₂ , contribution to digitalization, revitalization of abandoned industrial building.

4.

Project name	Solar power plant)	Location	Zasavje
Project description	The purpose of the investment is to use the area of the recultivated part of the landfill for non-hazardous waste (fly ash, slag) for the production of electricity from renewable sources. It is possible to set up a larger photovoltaic power plant in the area for the production of electricity. The produced electricity would be transmitted to the grid and the surplus would be used to produce hydrogen, where the abyss of nearby cogeneration with gas engines.		
Project relevance (development needs addressed)	• Reducing the risk of dependence on energy imports; • Increased security of regional energy supply; • Increase the share of energy from renewable energy sources; • Increasing energy efficiency;		

	- Improved air quality in the region and the fastest possible transition to clean and renewable energy sources; - Provide better living and working conditions in the region.
Estimated project implementation (project holder, timeline)	Project holder: large enterprise Project partners: two private partners Timeline: 2020 – 2022 (outlook until 2046)
Estimated cost and possible sources of financing	Project value: XX EUR Proposed financing: 33% JTF 20% project partners investment 47% grants
Project maturity (1- Conceptual design, 2- Studies and financial analysis performed, 3 - Financial structure & permits obtained)	2
Estimated economic, social, and environmental impact on the region (Incl. job creation)	Approximate renewable energy produced is 11,29 GWh and approximately 14,27 hectares of land rehabilitated, as well as two new job positions.

5.

Project name	Decommissioning of the main technological equipment and removal of facilities at the location of TPP Trbovlje, in an environmentally acceptable manner by selecting all hazardous substances and waste generated during decommissioning	Location	Zasavje
Project description	The location is located on the left bank of the Sava River, next to the main railway line Zidani Most - Ljubljana. The existing facilities in which the main technological equipment is installed need to be removed, and the decommissioning itself begins with the selective dismantling and decommissioning of individual technological assemblies. First, it is necessary to remove and properly hand over hazardous substances - liquids, lubricating oils, chemicals, and other hazardous waste. The handling of asbestos façade and roof tiles also requires special attention. Some of the facilities to be removed are located in the threshold railway strip and directly above the public railway line, and all others in the protective railway threshold (Railway Safety Act). The selective approach to the separation of waste generated during construction and demolition works at the source and the selective separation and collection are crucial in the dismantling and disposal itself. It is envisaged that the site will be cleared to a “brownfield” state while maintaining the existing infrastructure, which is the added value of the site for new development content and projects. The implementation of the project creates new industrial energy areas at a location that is socially and environmentally acceptable, has a connection to public railway infrastructure, water resources with granted water rights (drinking and technological water), connection to the transmission (110kV) and distribution network (35/20kV). New development projects have already been outlined at the site (e.g., PPE, energy storage facilities, technology park, electrolyser, industrial boutique tourism in the way of preserving industrial heritage).		
Project relevance	Increase the share of energy from renewable energy sources;		

(development needs addressed)	• Creation of high-value added jobs in the region; • Increase of employment possibilities in the region and with this reduce the daily work migrations from the region; Improved air quality in the region and the fastest possible transition to clean and renewable energy sources; • Monitoring and control of degraded areas.
Estimated project implementation (project holder, timeline)	Project holder: large enterprise Project partners: local private and public partners Timeline: 2020 – 2022 (outlook until 2046)
Estimated cost and possible sources of financing	Project value: XX EUR Proposed financing: Approximately 80% JTF financing The rest - project partners investments
Project maturity (1- Conceptual design, 2- Studies and financial analysis performed, 3 - Financial structure & permits obtained)	2
Estimated economic, social, and environmental impact on the region (Incl. job creation)	Revitalization of abandoned industrial area – this project is a pre-condition for the project Technology Park Sava

III. Benchmarking projects

Energy projects (regional and national level)

Project title	Aragon Infoenergy Project (P1)	Location	Aragon (Spain)
Project description	Network of eight LEADER LAGs that promote the energy transition in the region through use of local and renewable resources.		
Background information	Aragón Infoenergía is a network of eight LEADER LAGs that jointly implemented a project to promote an energy transition using local and renewable resources. The Local Action Group Bajo Aragon-Matarrana initiated the project, which subsequently expanded to include seven other LAGs. The collective project was established through several specific actions such as information provision, conferences, and advisory services.		
Main outcomes	The collaboration set up a communication strategy to make local entities and companies aware of the project. They created an info energy point and specific digital management tools. Auditors and experts have provided advice to local entities and citizens on better energy solutions to reduce energy consumption. Finally, they have established a partnership with the “Sensu Lato” technology (energy analysis tool).		
Project website	https://www.asiader.org/		
Response to development needs	• Higher share of energy from renewable sources (hereinafter: RES); • Increasing energy efficiency; • Increased security of local regional energy supply.		

Project title	Fintry development Trust (P2)	Location	Fintry (Scotland)
Project description	Using sustainability and resource efficiency as a strategy for the integrated development of a village.		
Background information	Fintry is a small village in central Scotland where a citizen-driven community management project has been implemented, based on the reduction of carbon emissions and development of sustainable energy. This action was initiated by citizens and managed by the Fintry Development Trust, which is based on a democratic organization involving citizens’ active representation of and engagement with the local population. The aim of the project is to involve the local community in the development of a sustainable energy project based on the funding of one windmill in a larger (15 turbine) wind farm. The financial resources produced by the windmill have allowed extension of the project to develop other actions directly related to sustainable energy		
Main outcomes	In the past, the Trust has offered free loft and cavity wall insulation to all residents, renovating the Sports Club for more energy efficiency, events for sensibilization of the community on Renewable Energy options, domestic heat pump and biomass heating systems installed, the SMART Fintry project which aims to balance local green energy production with local community energy use.		
Project website	http://fintrydt.org.uk/		
Response to development needs	• Increased security of local regional energy supply; • Higher share of energy from renewable sources (hereinafter: RES); • Increasing energy efficiency.		

Project title	Emissions Zéro (P3)	Location	Wallonia and Brussels Capital Region (Belgium)
Project description	Citizens’ cooperative producing local renewable energy from active in wind power, hydraulics, agricultural bio-methanisation and photovoltaics.		
Background information	Emissions Zéro is a citizen cooperative investing in the production of renewable energy in Wallonia and Brussels. In partnership with member organizations of REScoop Wallonia, other cooperatives and local associations, it allows citizens and stakeholders to choose to reclaim and manage the modes of production and consumption of their energy. It aims at boosting the development of all renewable energies and selecting solid and sufficiently profitable projects to be able to develop the cooperative while offering a reasonable financial return to the co-operators.		

Main outcomes	Currently, it counts 2,089 members. In 2019, our Zero Emissions Citizen Cooperative (EZ) supplied a little more than 5,000 households, based on a consumption of 3,500 kWh per household. Over 17,000 MWh of electricity is produced annually by the units the cooperatives support
Project website	https://www.emissions-zero.coop/
Response to development needs	• Reducing the risk of dependence on energy imports; • Increased security of local regional energy supply; • Higher share of energy from renewable sources (hereinafter: RES); • Increasing energy efficiency.

Project title	Feldheim - energy self-sufficient village (P4)	Location	Brandenburg (Germany)
Project description	Energy-transition of the Feldheim village in Brandenburg, Germany. The local district heating grid is owned by the connected households, enterprises, and the municipality of Treuenbieten.		
Background information	The village of Feldheim produces its own energy from wind, sun and biomass and feeds it into the grid. Their solution has become a role model for communities around the world. The company Energiequelle GmbH, together with the inhabitants and companies of Feldheim, has started the project "Energy Self-sufficient Place Feldheim", which is unique in Germany so far. Energiequelle GmbH has been operating in Feldheim since 1997. From 1997 to 2019, this company built a wind farm with 55 wind turbines with a total installed capacity of 74.1 MW. Since September 2015, the regional control power plant (RRKW) with a capacity of 10 MW has been stabilizing the cross-regional power grid, developed by Energiequelle GmbH and Enercon GmbH. Energiequelle GmbH operates a biogas plant together with Agrargenossenschaft Fläming e.G. All input materials are produced locally. This eliminates transport costs and the added value remains in the region. The biogas plant generates electricity and heat independent of weather conditions. Feldheim Energie GmbH & Co. KG is owned by Feldheim residents. The individually connected households are supplied self-sufficiently with electricity and heat from renewable energies on site via separate distribution networks. The heat is supplied from the biogas plant since December 2009, the electricity is supplied directly from the nearby wind farm since October 2010. During the construction undertaken by Feldheim Energie GmbH the telecommunications system was modernized at the same time.		
Main outcomes	Households of Feldheim are provided with locally produced heat and electricity, independent of the national grid. Intermittency of wind-based electricity is alleviated via a battery storage system. It is a combined effort by the local residents, businesses and local authorities. The Energie Forum Feldheim organises guided tours for policy makers, businesses, and schools alike.		
Project website	https://nef-feldheim.info/?lang=en		
Response to development needs	• Reducing the risk of dependence on energy imports; • Increased security of local regional energy supply; • Higher share of energy from renewable sources (hereinafter: RES); • Increasing energy efficiency.		

Human Capital and Social Infrastructure

Project title	Across the country (P5)	Location	Cserehát (Hungary)
Project description	Capacity development and employment in disadvantaged communities to support the local economy, through social enterprises.		
Background information	Cserehát (NE Hungary) and Zala (W Hungary) have many disadvantaged communities, that wished to launch independent, community-based productive activities. Confronted with a lack of competences, experiences, and information to build on, two resource centres were established, which provided capacity building, competence development, and supported the development of viable business models. The objective is to involve the local population and support them in the initiation of social enterprises and increase local employment.		
Main outcomes	Five new social enterprises and cooperatives were created (three in Zala and two in Cserehát). Two existing social enterprises received technical support (in business planning). The communities/enterprises had the capacity to take advantage of the development opportunities offered by the 2014-2020 programming period.		
Project website	www.creativeteamalapitvany.hu		

Response to development needs	• Increase of employment possibilities in the region and with this reduce the daily work migrations from the region; • Creation of high-value added jobs in the region.
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Project title	Odisseu (P6)	Location	Catalonia (Spain)
Project description	Fostering entrepreneurship and employability of younger population (up to 40) in rural area to reduce emigration trends.		
Background information	Odisseu is a response to rural youth exodus that aims to provide solutions for healthy generational renewal and fight the brain drain that affects most rural areas of Catalonia. Odisseu focuses on those aged up to 40 from rural and urban areas.		
Main outcomes	Local outreach through 20 workshops held in 12 educational centres, reaching 659 students. Events outside of educational centres reached a total of 2044 young people. Informative sessions attracting 226 students in the ICT sector and agri-food sector of Catalonia. Twelve grants for companies located in rural municipalities to host professional internships to University students.		
Project website	http://www.odisseujove.cat/		
Response to development needs	• Improvement the local educational system by strengthening the link between research, education, and the real sector.		

Project title	Cowocat_Rural (P7)	Location	Catalonia (Spain)
Project description	'Cowocat_Rural' works to attract young skilled professionals to rural areas and to tackle outmigration. Championing coworking, supported by ICT, as a new way of working in rural areas.		
Background information	The aim is to boost the creation of employment and economic activity in rural areas and to promote the values of coworking and teleworking in the participating territories. Its concept is based on the need to promote entrepreneurship using information and communication technologies. Among the activities: Design a digital platform to encourage the networking of co-workers and rural coworking spaces; Develop and promote coworking among different groups, such as young people or women; Developing a 'Coworking Rural Visa' (called RuralPass) that promotes and facilitates the mobility of professionals between the rural coworking spaces and between these rural spaces and urban ones.		
Main outcomes	Created the RuralPass programme, to promote and facilitate the mobility of co-workers, between the spaces located in the rural areas of Catalonia and with urban spaces. Organized a training programme in two institutes to promote the coworking concept among its students. Eighteen spaces and more than 130 professional co-workers are part of the network. twelve networking meetings have been organized among rural co-workers, with more than 300 attendees.		
Project website	https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/cowocatrural-network-coworking-spaces-rural-catalonia_en		
Response to development needs	• Increase of employment possibilities in the region and with this reduce the daily work migrations from the region; • Creation of high-value added jobs in the region.		

Economy

Project title	The Ludgate Hub (P8)	Location	Skibbereen (Ireland)
Project description	Development of a digital hub in support of local business development and attract young professionals.		
Background information	The Ludgate Hub is in Skibbereen, periphery of Cork, Ireland. It was selected as a pilot town by SIRO, a joint venture company between ESB and Vodafone to deliver a 100% fibre-to-the-building broadband network, to install for the first time in an Irish rural town 1GB of internet connectivity. The Hub rehabilitated an unoccupied bakery building. Before the project Skibbereen had very low-level broadband and some areas had no fibre connection. Skibbereen was the only town in West Cork without an e-centre or enterprise park and limited opportunities to facilitate incoming mobile workers.		
Main outcomes	The hub activities are self-sustained and employs 11 permanent staff. It attracted 25 Co-Working Companies; 1.8 Mio EUR in local services & trades spent since 2015. 15 new hub members permanently moved to the region with their families. And supported over 2,800 bed nights in the local area through events and operations.		

Project website	https://www.ludgate.ie/
Response to development needs	• Improve diversification of local economy and increase the number of spin-off companies present in the region; • Attract investments for further development of industries such as future technologies; • Further support and encouragement of region's start-up ecosystem and incentives for investment in research, development, and innovation (hereinafter: RDI).

Project title	GrowBiz (P9)	Location	Perthshire (Scotland)
Project description	Supporting start-up businesses facing typical challenges related to rural areas, through comprehensive support services for new and existing enterprises.		
Background information	Typically, start-up enterprises require more support in rural areas due to the unique challenges they face. This project aims to provide a comprehensive support service for new and existing enterprises in rural Perthshire in Scotland, leading to increased employment, improved skills, and a stronger local economy. GowBiz and the Enterprise Rural Perthshire project provide community-based enterprise support in rural Perth and Kinross, through a combination of one-to-one support, peer learning and support sessions, a mentoring programme and networking events.		
Main outcomes	Over 400 rural businesses had profited from the support. 2500 attendees across 200+ learning and networking events. Three women's networks set up which now meet at a monthly basis. Over 100 new businesses and 200 jobs created in the area. 45 mentors trained. The added value of the 'relational' approach, which is based on long-term relationships with businesses and encouraging collaboration and knowledge-sharing, is the network and legacy that it leaves behind - new businesses are equipped with tools and skills to do well on their own.		
Project website	https://www.growbiz.co.uk/		
Response to development needs	• Improve diversification of local economy and increase the number of spin-off companies present in the region; • Further support and encouragement of region's start-up ecosystem and incentives for investment in research, development and innovation (hereinafter: RDI); • Change of the historical mind-set of "life-long job safety" into more entrepreneurial mind-set of the whole generation and more programs promoting entrepreneurial-skills are needed (especially in early schooling).		

Project title	PISMA-NOVSKA Business incubator / DIHELP - DIH Enhanced Learning Programme (P10)	Location	Sisak-Moslavina County (Croatia)
Project description	Business incubator to create an entrepreneurial environment in the predominantly rural region, to create new jobs, and establish new businesses / start-ups, attract, and retain finances and young talent in the region		
Background information	The metal industry has a long tradition in the Sisak-Moslavina County and is one of the priority economic sectors. To use the untapped potential an entrepreneurial incubator has been established, aimed to support, and promote entrepreneurs in their business endeavours and create new employment opportunities in the predominantly rural area. Focus on digitization and modernization of metallurgy sector and entering in new market niche - the gaming industry. The establishment of business infrastructure, which will contain all the necessary metal processing equipment, such as a CNC machine, a 3D printer, as well as a music and film studio, all the necessary software, over 26 functional spatial units, will facilitate the growth of the entrepreneurial activity. The business incubator will influence the creation of a high-quality entrepreneurial environment by creating the space, providing services and the possibility of using the equipment to make it easier and more accessible to entrepreneurs to work on the development of their business. By developing the business and creating new products and services, the requirements for creating new jobs will be established with further impact to indirectly related value chains (PR companies, IT companies, companies in tourism, consulting companies etc.).		
Main outcomes	Expected outcomes include: creation of incentives programmes for investors; three new games launched per year; at least 50% of the student participating certified; 20 new jobs created per year; increased revenue of existing companies; in two years' time, 23 start-ups and existing companies to rent space and equipment; in the next 5 years DIH PISMO aims at building a gaming campus (e-sport arena, university, student dorm) where diverse type of competitions, meetings and shows will be performed.		
Project website	http://inkubator-pismo.eu/en/about-the-project/		

Response to development needs	• Diversification of local economy and decrease of regions coal dependency in the upcoming years; • Attract investments for further development of industries such as forestry and wood industry, tourism, future technologies, agriculture and food processing, and automotive industry; • Increase local competences to finance projects through public funding and private investments (domestic and foreign direct investment); • Further support and encouragement of regions start-up ecosystem and incentives for investment in RDI; • Change of the historical mind-set of “life-long job safety” into more entrepreneurial mind-set of the whole generation and more programs promoting entrepreneurial-skills are needed (especially in early schooling); • Creation of high-value added jobs in the region.
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Project title	Senderos de Teja (P11)	Location	Aragon (Spain)
Project description	Set-up of a youth social enterprise to develop targeted actions and services for local governments such as tourism and the valorisation of local resources, and ultimately to increase the attractiveness of rural areas and fight against depopulation.		
Background information	Building on the existing potential of a depopulated rural area, the project identified the particularities of the territory and developed viable and sustainable businesses. Special focus on elders (initiative "Grow old in your town), youth and women. Wide range of activities to really base the action on the local potential (sport, gastronomy etc.)		
Main outcomes	Women empowerment, in the rural world, creation of meeting places, management of climbing installations having a strong a social impact through the settlement of population		
Project website	https://senderosdeteja.com/		
Response to development needs	• Diversification of local economy and decrease of regions coal dependency in the upcoming years; • Attract investments for further development of industries such as forestry and wood industry, tourism, future technologies, agriculture and food processing, and automotive industry; • Support for the development of tourism, especially in the field of integrated regional tourism products; • Manage the declining population trend in the region by providing better living and working conditions.		

Project title	Mid Ireland Adventure (P12)	Location	Offaly (Ireland)
Project description	A start-up company specializing in outdoor sports activities used RDP support to purchase equipment and respond to increasing demand for adventure tourism. Harness the full range of natural and historical heritage assets' potential.		
Background information	Harnessing tourism untapped potential by the increasing demand for rural/outdoors adventure sports activities. wide range of activities, including mountain bike tours, guided walks, summer camps, stand up paddle board safaris, etc. After its initial start-up phase, LEADER funding was used to grow the business through the purchase of equipment, including mountain bikes, paddle boards and wetsuits.		
Main outcomes	The company attracts increasing visitor numbers to the Mid Ireland area, including local, national, and international customers. The increasing numbers of visitors bring spin-off benefits to the local economy (i.e., visitors use local retail, hospitality, and accommodation services). The company promotes water safety awareness, in addition to highlighting aspects of local culture and heritage through the inclusion of an educational element in its tours.		
Project website	www.midirelandadventure.ie		
Response to development needs	• Support the development of tourism by increasing accommodation capacities; • Attract investments for further development of industries such as forestry and wood industry, tourism, agriculture, and food processing; future technologies, metal production and processing, and automotive industry.		

Environment

Project title	Mijnwater (P13)	Location	Limburg (the Netherlands)
Project description	Reconversion of abandoned mine to a district-heating network using groundwater and renewable energy sources.		

Background information	After the closure of coal mines in Heerlen the mine passages filled with groundwater, which gets heated naturally. Since 2008, the water has been used for heating and cooling homes, offices, and buildings of Heerlen. The technology has been further developed into a hybrid network where residual H&C capacity is reused - the first thermal 'smart grid' for the supply of heating and cooling water in Europe.
Main outcomes	The Municipality conducted a study and then the community benefitted from it: 270 homes, various office buildings, (primary) schools, a day-care centre, a sports hall and two supermarkets experience the comfort of mine water energy Positive social impact: by maintaining industrial activity in a region and contributing to local economic development.
Project website	https://www.mijnwater.com/?lang=en
Response to development needs	• Coherent spatial development with optimal utilization of degraded areas, while taking into account the geotechnical characteristics and stability of these areas; • Rehabilitation and exploitation of the potential of degraded industrial areas, both for residential and industrial purposes as well as for tourism and recreation.

Project title	Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord (P14)	Location	North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany)
Project description	Former Ironwork site of the Thyssen Ironworks ceased production in 1985. The local assets have been refurbished and rehabilitated to become a Landscape Park. of approx. 180 hectares.		
Background information	The silhouette of the ironworks defined the townscape and demolition would have resulted in the loss of the industrial heritage. It is one of 25 attractions on the Ruhr Industrial Heritage Trail. It has created a large open recreational space for the population, as well as opportunities for sports and leisure; and cultural activities such as theatre and concert performances. Over time, biodiversity has increased and in addition to the landscaped areas, there is a wilderness area where no visitors are allowed.		
Main outcomes	A Landscape Park of approximately 180 hectares has been created.		
Project website	https://www.landschaftspark.de/en/		
Response to development needs	• Monitoring and control of degraded areas; • Control of the scope of degraded areas; • Harness the potential of brownfield development (high potential in tourism and recreation).		

General

Project title	Creetown Initiative (P15)	Location	Dumfries and Galloway (Scotland)
Project description	Local resident initiative to improve services and quality of life for people living in the village (and surrounding areas).		
Background information	Creetown is a village with a population of around 750. The Creetown Initiative was formed in 2002 by local residents who wanted to improve services and quality of life for people living in the village. It has carried out a wide range of projects in the village and surrounding area. The initiative now employs 14 staff and have expanded the scope of their work to include a consultancy service to other communities and organizations in Scotland.		
Main outcomes	Projects undertaken include leasing motorcycles to young unemployed people to allow them to access work or training while staying in the village; undertaking a community arts project to redesign the village square; managing the youth club; and redeveloping the closed down bar to create a space for community businesses focused on the tourism sector.		
Project website	http://creetowninitiative.co.uk/		
Response to development needs	• Managed the declining population trend in the region by providing better living and working conditions; • Attract investments for further development of industries such as tourism.		

Project title	HappyHealthy (P16)	Location	South Lanarkshire (Scotland)
Project description	HappyHealthy provides opportunities for active community participation in different areas to improve their quality of life.		
Background information	Cambusland and Rutherglen are considered disadvantaged areas, particularly in education, housing, employment, and income. The area has a long history in coal mining, heavy industry (iron and steel making and chemicals) and ancillary engineering works.		

	Healthy and Happy (HnH) is a community owned Development Trust that aims to improve the disadvantaged area by providing opportunities for people to actively improve their lives and neighborhoods through four work programmes: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities, CamGlen Radio (a local radio station), and CamGlen Biketown.
Main outcomes	Transforming Lives: provides support to individuals and families including volunteering, stress management, healthy living and social activities and anti-stigma campaigning. A local radio station: with over 65 volunteers who produce and broadcast content 24/7. Social Enterprise activities: incl. a community centre offering learning and employability support, and bicycle recycling. Community development: supports local disadvantaged communities to articulate and achieve their ambitions. HnH staff advise and help community groups, in personal capacity (confidence, parenting skills etc.), collaboration in activities, and Leadership, through an active role in the community and wider citizenship.
Project website	www.healthynhappy.org.uk
Response to development needs	• Managed the declining population trend in the region by providing better living and working conditions; • Improved standard of living in the region in terms of increasing household income; • Increase of employment possibilities in the region and with this reduce the daily work migrations from the region.

Project title	Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (P17)	Location	Monmouthshire (Wales)
Project description	Monmouthshire has set up an integrated Green Infrastructure Strategy, directly involving local communities. It defines local assets as recreational, cultural, tourism and business and social opportunities (e.g., nature conservation, natural flood risk management, woodland creation, reinforcing local heritage and cultural identity, potentials for small scale renewable energy installations etc.)		
Background information	Planning Policy Wales defines Green Infrastructure as the 'network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places' (such as towns and villages). This Green Infrastructure Strategy promotes an integrated and joined up approach to delivering Green Infrastructure that considers the needs of Monmouthshire's communities, environment, and economy. The GI Strategy has five strategic objectives and associated priorities for guiding the planning, management, and delivery of GI in Monmouthshire. These are to: • Improve Health & Wellbeing • Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience • Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness • Increase Climate Change Resilience • Support Sustainable Economic Development		
Main outcomes	Action Plan: Providing public benefits in the countryside through farming, working with farmers to support and advise them in sustainable agricultural practices, and appropriate changes to farm practices where necessary. Encouraging and supporting local producers to supply local food and to promote and encourage the use of local produce by public bodies, consumers, accommodation providers and local food outlets.		
Project website	https://www.monlife.co.uk/connect/green-infrastructure/green-infrastructure-strategy-2019/		
Response to development needs	• Active management of key risks, in particular flood risk of the valley (lakes and watercourses); • Coherent spatial development with optimal utilization of degraded areas, while considering the geotechnical characteristics and stability of these areas		



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