

# Slovenia's EU Cohesion Policy Programme 2021-2027

(EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)



I FEEL  
SLOVENIA



Co-funded by  
the European Union



WE WILL INVEST €3.2 BILLION  
TO MAKE SLOVENIA A GREENER,  
MORE DIGITAL, MORE CONNECTED  
AND MORE SOCIAL COUNTRY

### 5 POLICY OBJECTIVES



GREEN TRANSITION  
OF TWO COAL REGIONS

€249  
MILLION



### 1. A SMARTER SLOVENIA



€727  
MILLION



### 2. A GREEN LOW-CARBON SLOVENIA



€793  
MILLION

### 3. A MORE CONNECTED SLOVENIA



€511  
MILLION

### 4. A MORE SOCIAL SLOVENIA



€741  
MILLION

### 5. A SLOVENIA CLOSER TO ITS PEOPLE



€85  
MILLION

\* + TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

## SLOVENIA 2030: Ready for future challenges



Cohesion Policy is the main investment policy of the European Union (EU). Countless EU-funded projects realised in Slovenia so far have made a real difference to lives in Slovenia, boosting growth and spurring change for the better.

But now, in a period of rapid change that is dictated by the green and digital transition, **Slovenia needs to take action to make its economy and society more resilient, to seize new opportunities, and to accelerate the transition to a highly productive, low-carbon circular economy with the flagship objective of quality of life for all.** A total of **3.2 billion euros** in Cohesion Policy funding that has been allocated to Slovenia for the 2021-2027 period and will be available by the end of 2029 will be mobilised to achieve these objectives.

Slovenia is divided into two cohesion regions. Zahodna Slovenija is in the west of the country and belongs to more developed regions; Vzhodna Slovenija is in the east of the country and falls under less developed regions. In practice this means that the amount of EU support for the projects will vary between the two cohesion regions with different co-financing rates set for each region. Despite being in general more developed, Zahodna Slovenija witnesses considerable disparities in development levels between and within development regions. Thus, the country will secure the relevant national contribution that will allow the beneficiaries in both cohesion regions to get higher rates of co-financing for their projects.

Cohesion Policy funding for the period 2021-2027 is planned in a single nation-wide programme that covers four funds:

- **the Cohesion Fund** (used across the whole of Slovenia);
- **the European Regional Development Fund** or ERDF (used separately in Vzhodna Slovenija cohesion region and Zahodna Slovenija cohesion region);
- **the European Social Fund Plus** or ESF+ (used separately in Vzhodna Slovenija cohesion region and Zahodna Slovenija cohesion region)
- **the Just Transition Fund** or JTF (used in two coal regions: the Zasavje region and the Savinjsko-Šaleška region).

Three territorial approaches will be used to link urban and rural areas and to reduce development disparities. **Sustainable urban development will be supported through Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI), local development will supported through community-led local development (CLLD) approach, and regional development will receive support under the mechanism agreement on the development of region.**



## Key Slovenia's challenges that will be addressed through Cohesion Policy funding:

- boosting productivity growth,
- accelerating transition to a low-carbon circular economy,
- promoting inclusive social development and intergenerational solidarity, and
- supporting a just transition to a climate neutral and circular economy.

## POLICY OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES FOR SLOVENIA'S DEVELOPMENT

In the 2021-2027 period, Slovenia is committed to pursuing the following: 6 policy objectives and 10 corresponding priorities.

**POLICY OBJECTIVE 1:** A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity

**A SMARTER  
SLOVENIA**  
**€727**  
MILLION

**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**



**€436,5**  
MILLION



**€183,2**  
MILLION

**SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES**

**DIGITALISATION**  
 **€107,5**  
MILLION

## PRIORITY 1: INNOVATIVE KNOWLEDGE-BASED SOCIETY

> **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

The relevant investments will be based entirely on Slovenia's Sustainable Smart Specialisation Strategy (S5) and will aim to strengthen research and innovation performance, boost productivity growth, increase value added of the economy and re-establish Slovenia as strong innovator. S5 identifies 10 priority areas where Slovenia boasts comparative advantages, namely Smart Cities and Communities, ICT Horizontal Network, Smart Buildings and Homes, including the Wood Chain, Sustainable Food Production, Networks for the Transition to a Circular Economy, Sustainable Tourism, Health-Medicine, Mobility, Factories of the Future, and Materials as End Products.



The measures will focus on:

- [improving the innovation system in Slovenia and the incentives for knowledge transfer](#),
- which also includes the support for Strategic Research and Innovation Partnerships (SRIPs),
- [enhancing research capacities](#) by building and deploying research infrastructure (including e-infrastructure) in areas with the highest needs,
- [strengthening investments in research, development and innovation \(RDI\) projects](#) and collaboration between the stakeholders in the quintuple helix model, which also includes providing job opportunities for young researchers or early career researchers in companies and public research organisations,
- supporting collaboration in the European research area and strengthening synergies between different sources of funding and internationalisation by fostering collaboration between companies and R&D institutions in joint RDI projects at the international level

➤ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities

The digital transformation of the economy, society and public administration will be supported by investments focused on the [digitalisation of society and public administration](#) services for a safe and user-friendly experience by harnessing data and advanced digital technologies. This will include enhancing digital inclusion and digital competences; smart cities, communities and villages; digital innovation in spatial planning and the environment; integrated smart mobile public services; a single sign-on platform allowing login to e-services; digitalisation of the Slovenian language and cultural heritage and support to vulnerable groups; support to the uptake of AI-based solutions in the economy, public administration and society; and digitalisation of services and processes in the field of justice.

The measures will support the [digital transformation of small and medium-sized enterprises \(SMEs\) and the supportive and business environment facilitating digital transformation](#) (digital innovation hubs, chambers, Fablab networks, platforms supporting value chains, digital creative centres, etc.).

➤ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Enhancing sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs, including by productive investments





Slovenia aims to enhance the competitiveness of its economy by creating high value-added products and services and to strengthen corporate social responsibility, enabling a faster transition to a climate-neutral society. Innovations, promotion of creativity and harnessing of all opportunities of the Fourth Industrial Revolution will help create high value added. Particular attention in this context will be given to ensuring a stimulating and predictable environment that allows doing business and making investments by taking into account the specific needs and characteristics of small enterprises, and to promoting collaboration with cultural and creative industries and fostering business internationalisation.

The planned investments will be based on Slovenia's Sustainable Smart Specialisation Strategy (S5) and will focus on:

- **development and optimisation of the ecosystem supporting entrepreneurship and innovation**, which, inter alia, includes implementation of business support services via Slovenian Business Point – SPOT consulting, SPOT Global, innovation environment actors, business incubators, accelerators, a programme called An entrepreneurial approach to challenges (PONI), support to the national cultural and creative industries platform, e-procurement and smart management of Slovenian tourism destinations;
- **transition of new business ventures and newly born enterprises to a faster growth phase** and measures for fast-growing enterprises;
- **growth and development of enterprises** through various incentives, including incentives for social innovations, and through measures for embracing innovative approaches in various business segments;
- **internationalisation and cooperation in the macro-regional area by establishing partnerships with enterprises in foreign markets, promoting and strengthening brands of products and services of Slovenian enterprises abroad and supporting joint ventures in foreign markets.**

➤ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship

In order to support further economic development of Slovenia, it is essential to boost the development of knowledge and skills that are needed for smart specialisation, industrial transition as well as the green and digital transformation. The planned measures will target all relevant target groups with a view to bridging the gap between the education system and the labour market, notably in S5 priority areas by helping the country tackle mismatches between the skills supply and demand. In this context, attention will be paid to (i) investing into strengthening knowledge and skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and to support innovations for enterprises and other economy



stakeholders (further strengthening of competence centres for human resources development), (ii) developing and implementing new flexible learning pathways for upskilling of graduates in S5 priority areas, including promoting micro-credentials (the data and the findings provided by the newly anticipated tool called Skills Forecasting Platform will importantly feed the development of upskilling programmes), and (iii) enhancing knowledge and skills of systemic implementers of smart specialisation, both at the stakeholder and institutional level.

## **PRIORITY 2: DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY**

### **> SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Enhancing digital connectivity

Over 108,000 households in Slovenia do not have access to download speeds of at least 100Mbps. They make up so-called white areas that are found mostly in the countryside, in particular in mountainous terrains and hard-to-access remote places with low population density where construction is severely hampered and where, up until now, the operators have not demonstrated sufficient commercial interest to build broadband networks despite considerable state subsidies offered for broadband deployment.

The country intends to co-finance the [construction of open high-capacity broadband infrastructure or broadband connections](#) to households/dwellings, enterprises and public institutions in order to support the roll-out of new services and technologies, such as e-commerce, e-learning, Internet of Things, smart houses/buildings/homes, 5G, etc. in areas where such networks cannot be found today (open high-capacity broadband networks, backbone/access networks allowing transmission speeds of at least 100 Mbps to end-users, upgradable to 1 Gbps in the future) and where there is no commercial interest from investors or operators. Educational institutions will benefit from such support also outside these areas in order to ensure economic sustainability and adequate management of infrastructure, which is necessary for ensuring a smooth educational process.

**POLICY OBJECTIVE 2:** A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility



## PRIORITY 3: GREEN TRANSITION FOR CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

> **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions

The investments seeking to improve energy efficiency will focus on the [measures of energy renovation of buildings with consideration of sustainable construction and advanced management of systems in and on buildings](#).

The measures of comprehensive renovation of public sector buildings, private services sector buildings and private multi-apartment buildings will contribute to the improvement of energy efficiency by 2030 by at least 35%. Within the framework of the proposed measures, special attention will be paid to the successful integration of the principles of sustainability, aesthetics and inclusion in line with the New European Bauhaus initiative. In this context, the [measures to raise awareness of socially vulnerable groups and facilitate their access to grants and measures to reduce energy poverty](#) will be important as well.

**A GREEN  
LOW-CARBON  
SLOVENIA**  
**€793**  
MILLION

INVESTMENTS IN RENEWABLE  
ENERGY SOURCES



**€168**  
MILLION

FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT AND  
RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE



**€159**  
MILLION

WASTEWATER COLLECTION  
AND TREATMENT



**€169**  
MILLION

ENERGY RENOVATION  
OF BUILDINGS



**€103**  
MILLION

OTHER PROJECTS



**€194**  
MILLION

> **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Promoting renewable energy

Slovenia will [promote generation of electricity from renewable energy sources \(RES\) by investing in wind and solar power plants and building new renewable energy-driven district heating and cooling systems](#). Slovenia's forests and wood make up an exceptional development potential and the country is committed to further strengthening the forest-wood value chain. Therefore, support will be provided for the introduction of the most advanced technological solutions for the use of (waste) biomass that will allow for co-generation, i.e. simultaneous production and use of electricity and thermal energy and that will be designed to contribute to better air quality.





➤ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Developing smart energy systems, grids and storage outside the Trans-European Energy Network (TEN-E)

Facilitating and empowering energy communities at the distribution network level is an important step towards the achievement of the binding renewable targets by 2030 that follows the European trends of transition to a low-carbon society. New energy technologies, particularly in the field of energy efficiency, renewables and local energy supply, will be crucial to successfully tackling climate change and must enable the achievement of the said targets at costs that the economy will be able to bear. Investments in the projects that will increase renewable energy capacities and support energy self-sufficiency and in the projects on conversion of surplus renewable electricity and grid connected energy storage systems will be particularly important in this context.

➤ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches

The frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters as well as the extent of the damage caused by these disasters is expected to continue to increase in Slovenia, according to experts. Despite concerted efforts and prevention actions, such disasters cannot be fully prevented or forecast. Therefore, the country must enhance emergency preparedness by providing the relevant structural and non-structural measures and by responding swiftly and effectively in case of an emergency. Slovenia will focus on climate-related natural disasters that are considered to pose a significant risk, i.e. floods, wildfires, glaze ice, and implement the following measures:

- reducing flood risk in the areas of important impact of floods that show the highest level of readiness for implementation;
- upgrading the early warning and alert system raising awareness of weather emergencies and facilitating adaptation to them in a changed climate;
- measures for a fast, safe and effective response to climate-related natural disasters which comprise appropriate equipment, training and capacity building, and adequate infrastructure that supports the operation of units for response to such disasters.

➤ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Promoting access to water and sustainable water management

In terms of access to water and sustainable water management, Slovenia aims to improve the quality of its drinking water supply and wastewater treatment services. To this end, the country will, as a priority, support the construction of the missing wastewater collection and treatment



infrastructure, and the development of the relevant drinking water supply infrastructure.

The planned measures will include:

- **addressing non-compliances in agglomerations of 2,000 p.e. and more.** As part of the measure, the funds will be earmarked for the construction and renovation of the missing urban wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure in agglomerations with a p.e. of 2,000 and above;
- **promoting sustainable water management by regulating water supply systems serving more than 10,000 people.** Backup drinking water reservoirs and certain drinking water reservoirs for public water supply systems will be provided where the problem is most pressing, particularly in the area of the Slovenian Istria and the Karst hinterland.

➤ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

Support will be earmarked for facilitating the transition to a low-carbon circular economy, particularly through the introduction of low-carbon and circular business models that can be supported by the roll-out of digital technologies that will help enterprises stand up to the emerging challenges and deal with competitive pressures amid rising prices of raw materials and energy products. Priority will be given to supporting the solutions that will contribute the most to increasing value added and to launching products that have a low carbon footprint.

The measures will focus on **promoting the services of supportive environment for the green and digital transition through the policy making hub and the centre for green, creative and smart development and through circular innovation processes and resource efficiency in enterprises (introduction of circular business models and new low-carbon products, processes and technologies to strengthen value chains with the support of digitalisation)**. Support will be earmarked for sustainable economy projects and entrepreneurship projects that integrate circular economy solutions in their operations to establish circular material flows and minimise waste, wastewater, pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions and noise emissions during the production/provision of services throughout the product lifetime.

➤ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, and reducing all forms of pollution

The measures to improve the state of biodiversity in the Natura 2000 network and in other priority conservation areas are intended for priority Natura 2000 areas to improve the status of species and habitat types, and, to a lesser extent, to redevelop the parts of nature most affected by tourism, and for investments in green infrastructure in the urban environment.



## PRIORITY 4: SUSTAINABLE URBAN MOBILITY

**A MORE  
CONNECTED  
SLOVENIA**

**€511**

MILLION

UPGRADING RAIL NETWORK



**€290**

MILLION

UPGRADING ROAD NETWORK



**€100**

MILLION

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY



**€121**

MILLION

> **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Promoting sustainable multimodal urban mobility, as part of the transition to a net zero carbon economy

Investments in sustainable urban mobility will help increase the share of sustainable modes of transport in the daily commute of residents while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainable solution to this challenge lies in the transition to sustainable mobility with low levels of emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and air pollutants and boasting low energy consumption, with an emphasis on active mobility. Therefore, the planned measures will target the above areas. Coupled with measures aiming to improve the public passenger transport through the deployment of zero-emission vehicles, provision of adequate charging infrastructure for alternative energy fuels for different types of vehicles is key in this context. As a priority, funding will be allocated to the multimodal public transport system for door-to-door travel. Public passenger transport must form the backbone of the system and should be completed and upgraded with the cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, with an emphasis on public transport stops and transfer/interchange points where people can switch from private cars to public transport or carsharing/carpooling options or other active forms of travel.

**POLICY OBJECTIVE 3:** A more connected Europe by enhancing mobility

## PRIORITY 5: SUSTAINABLE (CROSS-)REGIONAL MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

> **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Developing a sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent, secure and inter modal TEN-T network

As a priority, the measures under this specific objective will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the most crucial sector, i.e., transport. The relevant measures will be selected on the basis of traffic flow forecasts, traffic safety forecasts, projected environmental impacts and social acceptability of the projects.



Besides being strategically important for Slovenia, these projects will also play a wider role as they will form important sections of the TEN-T network. First and foremost, investments will be made in the modernisation of railway infrastructure on the Mediterranean and Baltic-Adriatic corridors. These measures will relate not only to infrastructure, but also to the organisation, traffic management and traffic safety. In this context, two measures are foreseen, namely [Upgrade of the stateborder Dobova–Zidani Most railway line – Phase 1 – State border–Dobova–Sevnica section](#) and [Reconstruction of the first tube of the Karavanke Tunnel](#).

➤ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility

The goal under this specific objective is to improve national and regional connections within Slovenia and to upgrade the network so that railways will provide the backbone transport network where there already is a network and that will be connected to the road network, public passenger transport, park and ride systems and cycling infrastructure. Shorter travel times, optimised railway timetables and other measures (transfer points, bike racks, coordinated timetables, etc.), which are the basis of the entire transport system, will increase the attractiveness of public passenger transport and foster sustainable mobility.

The selected measures that focus on the construction of development axes and other regional connections to improve access to the TEN-T network are priority projects on the regional railway network. A series of horizontal transport planning measures will ensure that these measures are appropriately aligned, coordinated and effective.

The following measures are foreseen:

- [upgrade of the Maribor–Ruše railway line](#);
- [third development axis - south: Novo mesto–Maline \(Stage I – stages 1 and 2\)](#);
- [further work on the third development axis: Dramlje–Šentjur section](#);
- [national cycling network](#);
- [non-infrastructural sustainable mobility measures at the horizontal level](#);
- [sustainable mobility infrastructure at the local level](#);
- [sustainable mobility system at the local level](#).



## POLICY OBJECTIVE 4: A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights



### PRIORITY 6: SKILLS AND A RESPONSIVE LABOUR MARKET

> **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Improving access to employment and activation measures for all jobseekers, in particular young people, especially through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, for long-term unemployed and disadvantaged groups on the labour market, and for inactive people, as well as through the promotion of self-employment and the social economy

In order to ensure a competent and sufficient future workforce, one that meets the future needs of the employers, Slovenia needs to provide a set of targeted activities for the unemployed, particularly the long-term unemployed, the elderly, and the less educated, as well as for the jobseekers and persons whose employment or self-employment is at risk. As a general rule, these activities will aim at ensuring adequate competences facilitating the transition to the labour market and shortening the duration of unemployment.

Support will be provided for the [implementation of active employment policy \(AEP\) measures and job retention programmes targeting groups whose employment or self-employment is at risk or temporary; the implementation of measures to reduce and prevent precariousness and prevent transition from work back to unemployment for target groups in atypical forms of work and the implementation of measures to promote self-employment and the social economy.](#)

> **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Modernising labour market institutions and services to assess and anticipate skills needs and ensure timely and tailor-made assistance and support for labour market matching, transitions and mobility



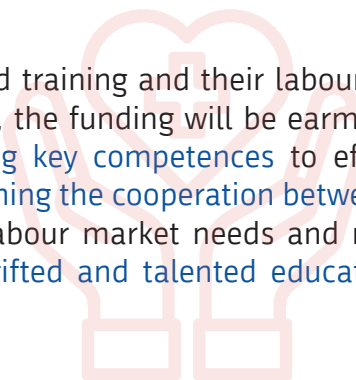
The reform of labour market institutions and modernisation of their services will help improve coordination of supply and demand in the labour market, anticipation of skills needs, transitions and mobility in the labour market and, above all, adequately qualified staff working in the labour market institutions. Additional digitalisation and rationalisation of work processes, development of new services, strengthening of the integration of all stakeholders in the labour market are also planned. In this context, [development and upgrading of the labour market platform for long-term forecasting of skills](#) required in the labour market will be one of the key measures.

- **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Promoting the adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change, active and healthy ageing and a healthy and well-adapted working environment that addresses health risks

Social and demographic changes and low employment rates in the 55-64 age group call for a comprehensive approach to adapting jobs and workplaces, particularly for older employees, to provide a high-quality, safe and healthy working environment in enterprises and the public sector, and promote worker involvement in management and decision-making. [Measures to improve the quality of the working environment and working conditions and to promote lifelong learning](#), particularly flexible options for upgrading and reskilling for everyone, taking into account entrepreneurial and digital skills, to better anticipate changes and demands for new skills based on the needs of the labour market, to facilitate career transitions, and [to promote professional mobility and intergenerational cooperation](#), with an emphasis on the transfer of knowledge and skills between generations, will contribute to extending working lives, particularly of older workers.

- **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Improving the quality, inclusiveness, effectiveness and labour market relevance of education and training systems including through validation of non-formal and informal learning, to support acquisition of key competence including entrepreneurial and digital skills, and by promoting the introduction of dual-training systems and apprenticeships

In order to improve the quality and effectiveness of education and training and their labour market relevance, and to support the acquisition of the key competences, the funding will be earmarked in particular for the [digital transformation of education; enhancing key competences](#) to effectively respond to the future needs of the economy and society, [strengthening the cooperation between educational institutions and employers or social partners](#) to meet labour market needs and needs in emerging sectors of the economy, also through [rethinking the gifted and talented education and upgrading career guidance](#).





- > **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Promoting lifelong learning, in particular flexible upskilling and reskilling opportunities for all taking into account entrepreneurial and digital skills, better anticipating change and new skills requirements based on labour market needs, facilitating career transitions and promoting professional mobility

To achieve greater participation of individuals in lifelong education and learning, particularly of less educated and less qualified persons and elderly people, to improve professional competences of employees, to put in place an effective career orientation system, to support the development and deployment of digital educational resources and high-quality didactic software, and to reduce the digital divide, the measures under this specific objective will be aimed at the implementation of measures to obtain secondary education qualifications and a new profession; upskilling and reskilling, professional development and training; measures to acquire and increase literacy and essential skills; measures to improve general education, including digital and other key competences for lifelong learning and support activities for lifelong learning; and measures to improve the quality of adult education system, including the implementation of expert and development tasks in the area of lifelong learning.

- > **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training

Today's educational process is faced with ever-changing demands and constant needs for modernisation. As such, it requires systemic investments in infrastructure which must, inter alia, consider (EU) requirements relating to improved energy efficiency, use of renewables and roll-out of advanced technologies. To ensure a revamped infrastructure fit to accommodate today's educational processes and provide ICT infrastructure to support the digitalisation of teaching, learning and administrative studies-related processes and work, while also supporting the work of youth sector organisations, the measures under this specific objective will aim at the investments in existing and new educational and training facilities, ensuring appropriate ICT infrastructure in higher education institutions and public higher education libraries as well as in youth sector organisations.



## PRIORITY 7: LONG-TERM CARE AND HEALTH, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

- **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Fostering active inclusion with a view to promoting equal opportunities, non-discrimination and active participation, and improving employability, in particular for disadvantaged groups

Activating as quickly as possible, in particular the long-term unemployed individuals, is essential to secure a workforce that is profoundly affected by the demographic changes and population ageing. Enabling people to enter the labour market as quickly as possible avoids the risk of dependency on unemployment-related benefits and at the same time ensures that that the investment made in education and training is returned. Investments will be earmarked for the [promotion of social inclusion of persons exposed to the risk of poverty or social exclusion facing labour market obstacles; measures facilitating the transition of young people with special needs from school to the labour market; and employment, training and promotion of social inclusion of vulnerable group members in the culture sector.](#)

- **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Enhancing equal and timely access to quality, sustainable and affordable services, including services that promote the access to housing and person-centred care including healthcare; modernising social protection systems, including promoting access to social protection, with a particular focus on children and disadvantaged groups; improving accessibility including for persons with disabilities, effectiveness and resilience of healthcare systems and long-term care services

Outbreak of covid-19 exposed the many shortcomings of Slovenia's care system, particularly of the long-term care. The country needs to upgrade the information infrastructure of social care facilities to improve access to the relevant data. At the same time, the epidemic revealed the challenges of Slovenian health system, shedding light on workforce capacities and long waiting times. Thus, the country needs to enhance its prevention programmes (including sports), and design programmes adapted to the needs of elderly people while supporting measures to strengthen social innovation to respond swiftly and efficiently to the rapidly changing social needs. Investments will support a series of comprehensive and targeted [measures to strengthen social care services, the resilience of the long-term care system and measures for the early detection of dementia; measures to strengthen mental health programmes and drug prevention programmes; measures to strengthen emergency medical services; measures to strengthen digital literacy of the health and long-term care workforce and health literacy of the population; measures to strengthen preventive healthcare activities and management of age-related frailty;](#)





measures to provide a supportive environment for the development and implementation of new services, products and models to address social challenges in an innovative way; and measures for social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

>**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Promoting social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including the most deprived persons and children

The country must guarantee social security, protection and inclusion of families, particularly children and elderly people, and prevent or reduce the risk of poverty through various mechanisms. Particularly important are various forms of assistance that the country delivers (services, programmes, social transfers, etc.) which must be of high quality, widely available, and diverse. Support will be provided for the following:

- social inclusion programmes,
- social inclusion measures for persons with special needs,
- implementation of measures of multigenerational centres network and multipurpose Roma centres,
- implementation of various activities for prisoners and persons on probation, and
- measures to improve the integration of migrants in the education system.

>**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Promoting the socio-economic inclusion of marginalised communities, low-income households and disadvantaged groups, including people with special needs, through integrated actions, including housing and social services

In Slovenia, care for people who need daily assistance with social or health needs from others (elderly people, vulnerable groups and people with special needs) is mostly provided in institutional settings or by family members or relatives. In recent years, following EU policy trends, the concept of deinstitutionalisation or provision of community-based care has come to the forefront, though. To this end, Slovenia will support the measures focusing on **investments in social infrastructure**, primarily purchase and adaptation of social infrastructure for adults and children with disabilities, including long-term care infrastructure that will be used for provision of integrated community-based services and forms of care and will facilitate the integration of these individuals in society while helping them lead more independent and fulfilling lives.

- > **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Ensuring equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care, and promoting the transition from institutional to family-based and community-based care



The purpose of investments in healthcare is to improve accessibility to healthcare services and disease prevention programme for residents helping them stay healthy and maintain independent living. The measures will cover investments in satellite emergency centres and out-of-hours medical services providing most urgent medical care round-the-clock, and in mental health centres, and other investments in public health institutions providing healthcare services through health promotion and disease prevention. The investments will also cover the purchase of high-cost medical equipment and devices that are crucial for delivering high-quality patient care.

## **PRIORITY 8: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND CULTURE**

- > **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation

In its broadest sense, culture and cultural identity, reflected and embedded in the comprehensive offer of Slovenian tourism, can make a decisive contribution to perfecting the value chain and increasing value added of the Slovenian tourism. The measures that will receive support will strengthen social cohesion through improved accessibility to cultural heritage and increase value added of the tourism sector by enriching the cultural offer and improving the living environment in the less developed Vzhodna Slovenija cohesion region. The goal of this specific objective is to conserve, protect and revive cultural heritage for future generations, ensure the accessibility of heritage for everyone, and create new jobs that will be attractive particularly to young people. Tourism-related content will enrich the cultural heritage, which will boost the development of tourism in the less developed region, producing multiplier effects on economic development.





**POLICY OBJECTIVE 5:** A Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives



**URBAN DEVELOPMENT (CTN)**



**€56**  
MILLION

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (CLLD)**



**€29**  
MILLION

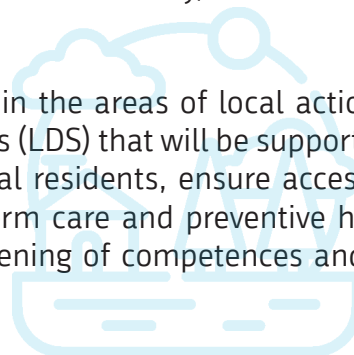
## **PRIORITY 9: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL AREAS**

> **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Fostering the integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism, and security in urban areas

Urban renewal measures are multidimensional, involving economic, environmental, social and climate aspects. Slovenia will promote the efficient use of land in urban areas. To this end, support will be provided for measures where renovation and revival will be carried out on vacant, underutilised, in some cases even degraded, built-up areas in line with the principle of inner urban development. Priority will be given to the projects that support the activities for an economic and social revival of urban areas and development of new creative clusters and business centres while pursuing the goals of sustainable urban strategies of urban municipalities.

> **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Fostering the integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental local development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security, in areas other than urban areas

Community-led local development (CLLD) will be implemented in the areas of local action groups (LAG) in accordance with the relevant local development strategies (LDS) that will be supported by the ERDF. The projects will aim to improve the quality of life of local residents, ensure accessibility of services both in urban centres and rural areas, improve long-term care and preventive healthcare measures, and promote intergenerational cooperation, strengthening of competences and care for disadvantaged groups.





LAG areas will also become more recognisable in the field of local entrepreneurship, innovative use of local resources, (eco-)tourism and conservation of natural diversity and cultural heritage.

## POLICY OBJECTIVE 6: Europe for a just transition

GREEN  
TRANSITION  
OF TWO COAL  
REGIONS

€249  
MILLION

SAVINJSKO-ŠALEŠKA REGION



€173,9  
MILLION

ZASAVJE REGION



€74,9  
MILLION

## PRIORITY 10: RESTRUCTURING OF COAL REGIONS

### Just Transition Fund

The concept of a just transition is intended to help the regions and people deal with the social, employment, economic and environmental impacts of the EU's transition towards its 2030 targets for energy and climate and the climate-neutral economy by 2050 based on the Paris Agreement. Two coal regions in Slovenia are eligible for support under the Just Transition Fund, namely Zasavje and Savinjsko Šaleška (SAŠA). As the two coal regions are at different stages of transition, the respective investment strategies will differ as well.

In the **region of Zasavje** where the coal mine has already stopped operating, the region's transition should be supported with a series of targeted socio-economic measures. In this context, investments in reduction of labour shortages, strengthening and upgrading of RDI capacities in S5 areas, supporting socio-economic development, upskilling, diversifying the economy and increasing value added per employee, which will create job opportunities in SMEs and large enterprises, will be especially important.

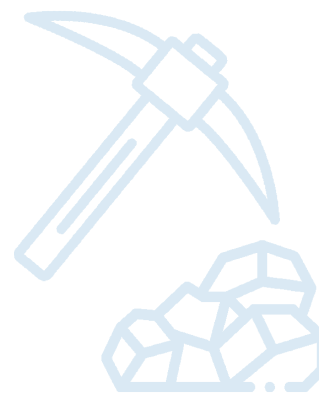




The coal-exit strategy of the **SAŠA region** foresees that Block 6 of the Šoštanj Thermal Power Plant will shut down and lignite extraction activities will cease at the latest by 2033.

The funding from the Just Transition Fund should support the diversification of activities of energy companies, strengthening and upgrading of RDI capacities related to the green transition and S5, measures for a successful and efficient provision of workforce in sectors where labour and skills shortages are currently reported, and strengthening of various competences for the different target groups. Measures supporting economic activities will focus on adding value in the businesses that already operate and on developing new propulsive businesses. One of the key challenges in the region is to ensure alternative heat sources for the remote district heating system.

The above measures are described in detail in the Territorial Just Transition Plan for the Zasavje region and the Territorial Just Transition Plan for the Savinjsko-Šaleška region. An important aspect of the two territorial just transition plans is the governance mechanism; the latter ensures that the relevant stakeholders and regional actors participate both in the design of an individual territorial plan and in all phases of its implementation.





## OPERATIONS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE IN THE 2021-2029 PERIOD

- **Upgrade of the key research infrastructures** – this operation encompasses the upgrade of the research infrastructures of the University of Maribor (RIUM), the upgrade of the high-performance computing capacities, the purchase of the state-of-the-art research equipment, the establishment of INNOVUM Technology and Innovation Centre, and the construction of the new Faculty of Mechanical Engineering.
- **Ensuring flood protection in the Savinja River basin** is a continuation of stage 1 of the project, and will actually ensure the required flood safety in the area, as larger urban areas are still at risk of flooding.
- **Upgrade of the 33.7-kilometre long railway line between the state border, Dobova and Zidani Most**, section state-border-Dobova-Sevnica, which is part of the Mediterranean TEN-T corridor. This will increase throughput capacities and travel speeds while improving safety and reducing noise pollution in built-up areas in order to eliminate the bottleneck on the main railway connection between Slovenia and Croatia.
- **Modernisation of services and integration of labour market institutions** is about strengthening the employer office network that helps employers find appropriate workers and about modernising services that the labour market institutions provide. The key objective is to establish the Skills Forecasting Platform that will bring together employers, jobseekers and advisers of the Employment Service of Slovenia.
- In 2025, the European Capital of Culture will be Nova Gorica from Slovenia and Gorizia from Italy. United under the slogan **GO! 2025**, the two cities will become the first truly cross-border European capital of culture. The planned investments include the renovation of the Evropa trg square and the construction of a multipurpose facility and EPICentre.
- The **Zasavje region** must step up its efforts to build RDI capacities. This will be facilitated by the newly established **Centre for Demonstration and Training in Zero Carbon Technologies** that will support research in zero carbon technologies for the transition to a modern green industry. The **Savinjsko-Šaleška region** will benefit from the transition to **a new, green generation of remote district heating** that will be both economically viable and environmentally sustainable as well as coal-free.