

Regional Action Plan

Gorenjska Slovenia

Activity 1.3

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1. Introduction

1.1. General information of the Partner

PROJECT	Danube Wood(s) Route
PARTNER ORGANISATION CONCERNED	BSC d.o.o. Kranj
COUNTRY	Slovenia
NUTS2 REGION	Western Slovenia
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1.2. Overall and specific objectives of the Action Plan

The Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route Regional Action Plan for the Gorenjska region is a strategic document developed within the framework of the Danube Wood(s) project and aligned with the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route Strategy. The overarching goal of the project is to promote the sustainable use of forest resources while integrating wood-related cultural heritage into broader sustainable development processes, including ecotourism.

This Regional Action Plan (RAP) translates the transnational goals of the Danube Wood(s) project and its common strategy into concrete, place-based actions tailored to the specific needs and conditions of the Gorenjska region. While acknowledging that certain issues—such as forest ownership structure and large-scale climate adaptation—are being addressed at the national level or within other policy frameworks, this RAP focuses specifically on regional needs that are not yet adequately covered by existing national or regional strategies or legal instruments.

The focus is thus placed on targeted, locally relevant actions that:

- reflect underutilized cultural and tourism potential of the region,
- address gaps in education, branding, and stakeholder cooperation,
- and require implementation through local partnerships and initiatives.

The RAP for Gorenjska aims to contribute to ecological, economic, and social sustainability while fostering cross-sector collaboration and community-based development. Its objectives are to:

- Revitalize Gorenjska's wood-related cultural heritage by supporting the conservation and interpretation of traditional wooden structures, sites, and practices that are currently neglected or insufficiently visible.
- Develop sustainable tourism offers based on wood culture and forest landscapes through thematic trails, festivals, and visitor infrastructure that connect nature, craftsmanship, and local identity.
- Promote entrepreneurship and green innovation in wood-based industries, focusing on small-scale, circular bioeconomy models and regional value chains.
- Enhance youth engagement and knowledge transfer through vocational education, intergenerational learning, and modernized curricula reflecting the cultural and environmental value of wood.
- Strengthen regional stakeholder cooperation among actors in forestry, culture, tourism, and education to support the development of the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route in Gorenjska.

- Raise public awareness through community outreach, educational campaigns, and digital storytelling tools that promote sustainable forestry and the cultural significance of wood.

Through these actions, the RAP for Gorenjska aims to contribute to the long-term objectives of the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route initiative, while ensuring that development in the region is rooted in its specific assets, challenges, and opportunities.

2. Regional Analysis

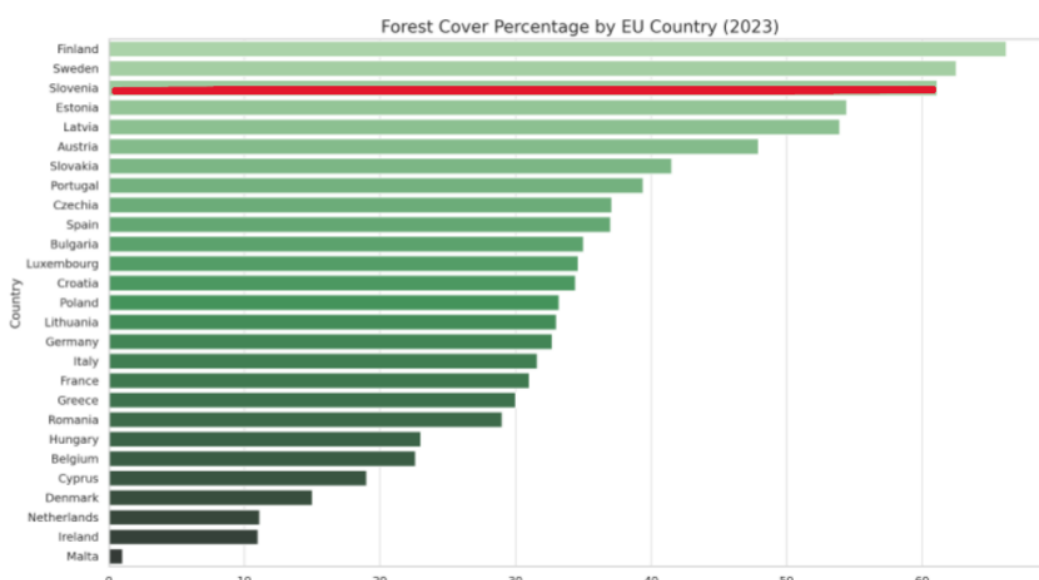
The regional analysis of the RAP was carried out to find out what are the main challenges of the Gorenjska region in Slovenia identifying the opportunities that can be taken up by actions elaborated later in Section 4.

2.1. Natural and cultural assets

Gorenjska is characterized by exceptional biodiversity, strongly influenced by its Alpine and pre-Alpine geography. The region's natural heritage is a priority within Slovenia's broader nature conservation framework, overseen by the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, with key implementation by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation (ZRSVN). Slovenia's commitment to conserving its natural heritage, as highlighted by the government's policies, provides Gorenjska with a robust legal and institutional framework for protecting its valuable biodiversity.

Slovenia is a heavily forested country, with 62% of its national territory covered by forests, positioning it among the leaders in forest coverage within the EU (e.g., Finland 66.2%, Sweden 62.5%, Slovenia 61.1%).

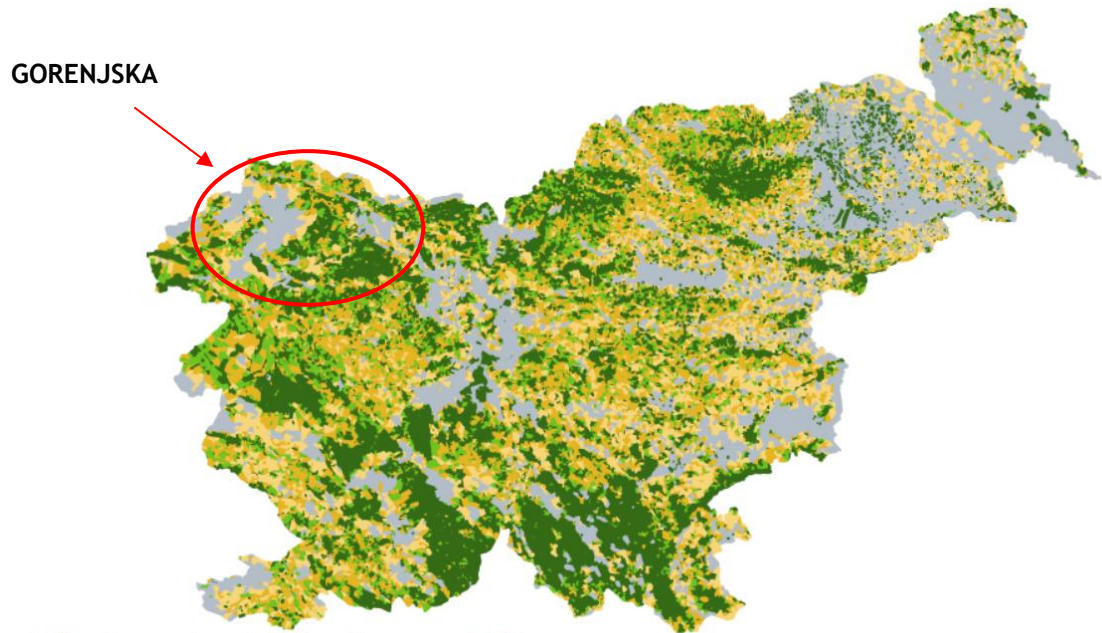
Figure 1: Forest Coverage Percentage by EU Country (2023)



Source: (EUROSTAT, 2025)

This indicates that Gorenjska also has a significant proportion of its area under forest cover, playing a crucial role in maintaining biodiversity.

Figure 2: Forest cover by forest compartments (Slovenia)

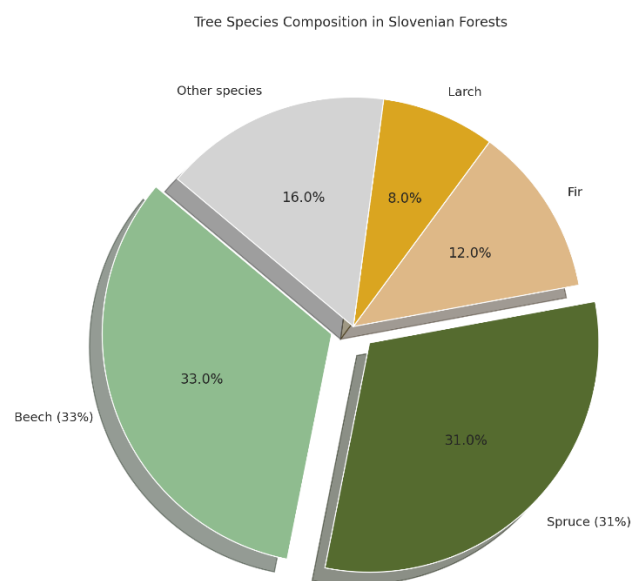


Forest cover by forest compartments (yellow - low, green - high)

Source: (Slovenia Forest Service, 2025)

The prevalent mixed forests, composed of beech, spruce, fir, and larch, provide habitat for a wide array of fauna, including various bird species, mammals (such as bear, wolf, and lynx), reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates.

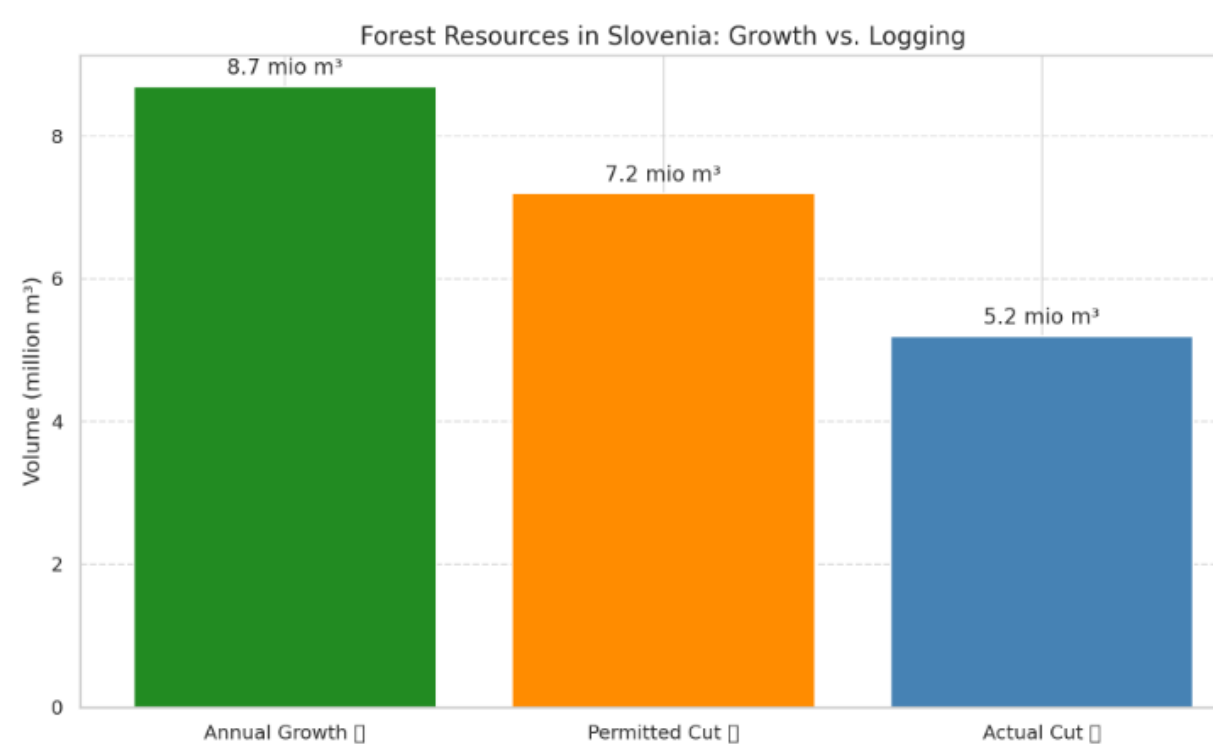
Figure 3: The Species Composition in Slovenian Forests



Source: (Slovenia Forest Service, 2025)

Slovenian forests are generally in good condition, despite numerous natural disasters and bark beetle outbreaks in the last decade. The growing stock of forests has increased in the last thirty years from 201 to 304 m³/hectare. Notably, almost half (48%) of the wood stock consists of trees thicker than 30 cm, and a quarter of trees thicker than 50 cm, which is favourable for both wood production and biodiversity. The annual forest increment has also grown, from 5.2 m³/hectare per year in 1994 to 7.4 m³/hectare per year in 2023, resulting in an annual growth of approximately 8.7 million m³ of wood. The planned annual cut has doubled in the last three decades to 7.2 million m³, representing about 20% of the wood stock and 82% of the annual increment. In the last few years, the annual cut in Slovenian forests has been between 4.0 and 6.3 million m³ of trees, of which 55 to 66% are conifers.

Figure 4: Forest Resources in Slovenia: Growth vs. Logging



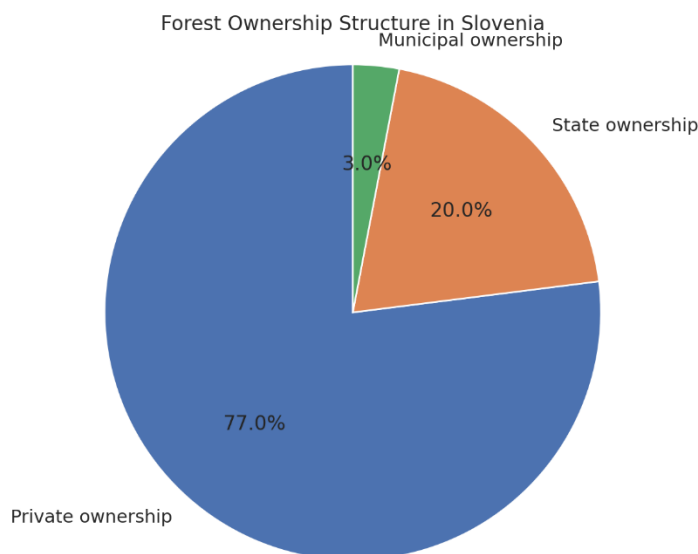
Source: (Slovenia Forest Service, 2025)

Due to natural forest management, the natural regeneration capacity of forests in Slovenia is very high; 90 to 95% of forest areas do not require regeneration. Forests are mostly regenerated naturally with seeds from present seed trees of mature forest stands. Planting and sowing are only used in areas where natural regeneration is difficult or where rapid regeneration is necessary for soil protection. Planting is also used to improve the diversity of tree species and contribute to the improvement of habitats for some rare or endangered species. In the last decade, around 500 hectares of forests have been regenerated annually by planting and sowing. In the last five years, 5.7 million seedlings of forest trees have been planted in Slovenian forests. Broadleaves predominate, and the proportion of beech and spruce is decreasing, while the proportion of other tree species is increasing. (Dolenc, 2025).

Regarding ownership, 77% of Slovenian forests are privately owned, 20% are state-owned, and 3% belong to municipalities. Private forest ownership is highly fragmented, with an average property size of about 3.2 hectares, often further divided into multiple separate parcels. This fragmentation,

combined with 282,500 forest properties owned by 409,000 forest owners, complicates professional forestry work and the optimal utilization of wood in private forests (Slovenia Forest Service, 2025).

Figure 5: Forest Ownership Structure in Slovenia



Source: (Slovenia Forest Service, 2025)

A defining characteristic of Gorenjska is its significant coverage by protected areas. This includes substantial portions of the Julian Alps and Kamnik-Savinjska Alps, which harbor a wealth of endemic and rare species adapted to high-altitude conditions. These areas feature diverse ecosystems such as alpine meadows, rocky terrains, scree slopes, and high-mountain forests. Notably, a large part of Triglav National Park, Slovenia's only national park, falls within the Gorenjska region, making it a crucial area for biodiversity conservation. Gorenjska also has a high proportion of its territory designated as Natura 2000 sites, which are essential for conserving species and habitats of European importance. In Slovenia, 45% of forests are included in the Natura 2000 network, and 70% of all Natura 2000 areas are forested. This is significantly above the European average, where only 23% of forests are part of the Natura 2000 network (European Parliament, 2025). Forest reserves (9,426 hectares) and eco-cells (8,782 hectares by the end of 2023), which are under contractual protection, make a substantial contribution to biodiversity conservation and nature protection.

The Julian Alps, a significant part of Gorenjska, are recognized as the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve of the Julian Alps under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. This designation promotes a balanced relationship between people and nature across the Slovenian and Italian Alps, aiming to conserve biodiversity, promote sustainable development, and involve local communities. The region's water ecosystems, including the Sava River and its tributaries, and important lakes like Lake Bled and Lake Bohinj, are vital for aquatic biodiversity, supporting unique fish fauna and other aquatic organisms.

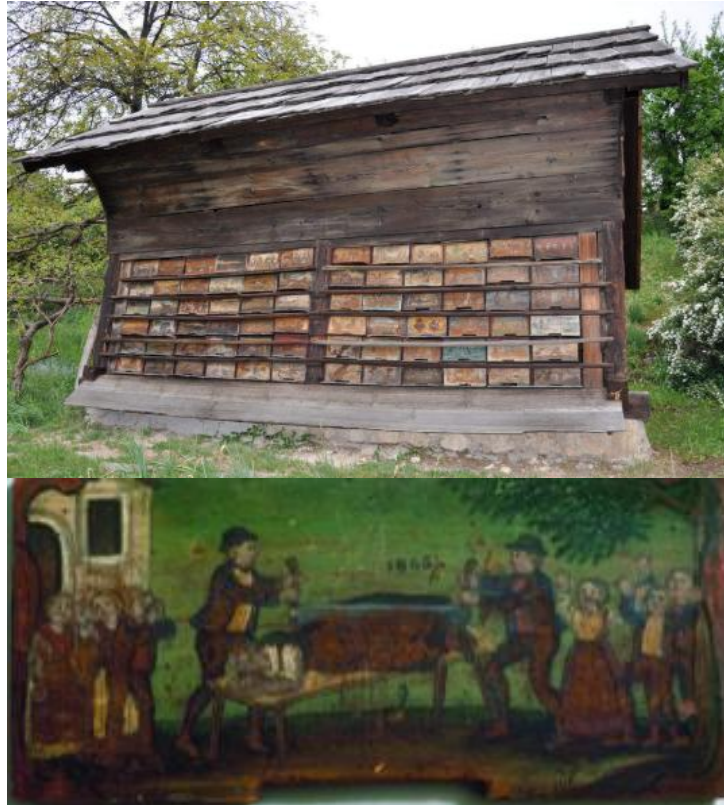
Cultural Assets

The rich natural abundance of Gorenjska's forests has profoundly shaped its cultural landscape and traditions. As a region where over 60% of the territory is forested, wood has been, for centuries, an indispensable material and a fundamental element of local identity. Historically, wood was central to daily life for building homes, crafting tools, constructing furniture, and serving as a primary source for heating, cooking, and charcoal production.

This deep-rooted connection to forestry has fostered a vibrant tradition of woodcrafts and unique cultural practices:

- **Carpentry and Joinery:** Evident in intricate carved blejske skrinje (Bled chests), distinctive traditional alpine windows and doors, and the robust rural furniture found throughout the region.
- **Beehive Panel Painting (Panjske končnice):** A unique Slovenian artistic tradition, particularly prevalent in Gorenjska, where painted wooden panels adorn the fronts of beehives, blending artistic expression with apiculture heritage.

Figure 6: Beehive of Janez Janša with beehive panel painting (panjske končnice)



Source: https://kraj.eu/slovenija/cebelnjak_antona_janse/slo

- **Charcoal Production (Oglarjenje):** A historically significant economic and cultural practice, especially preserved in the Pokljuka and Jelovica forests. Modern demonstrations of coaling continue to showcase this living heritage.
- **Pipe Making in Gorjuše (Gorjuška fajfa):** A local craft dating back to the early 20th century, characterized by the creation of ornate wooden pipes, often made from pear wood with fine inlays.

Figure 7: Gorjuška fajfa / Gorjuše pipe



- Source: <https://zakladnicazgodovine.si/product/gorjuska-fajfa-fajfur/>
- **Boatbuilding:** Demonstrated by the iconic handcrafted pletna boat on Lake Bled and the Triglavska roža electric wooden boat on Lake Bohinj, both testaments to local woodcraft traditions adapted for water transport and tourism.

Figure 8: Pletna boat on Lake Bled



Source: <https://www.bled.si/sl/kaj-videti-poceti/znamenitosti/38/pletna/>

The traditional alpine architecture of Gorenjska further reflects the pervasive integration of wood into its cultural landscape:

- **Hayracks (kozolci):** These distinctive wooden structures, used for drying hay and storing tools, are iconic elements of Slovenian rural heritage and a testament to traditional agricultural practices intertwined with forest resources.

Figure 9: Studorski kozolci / Studor Hayracks



Source: <https://www.kamra.si/mm-elementi/planina-lopucnica-dolina-triglavskih-jezer-150/>

- **Wooden gank houses:** Characterized by their covered balconies and timber framing, these houses showcase the region's adaptation to its climate and the skillful use of wood.
- **Historic farmhouses:** Examples like Oplen House in Studor, Liznjekova House in Kranjska Gora, and Kajžnikova House in Rateče, serve as preserved architectural heritage, illustrating the enduring use of wood in both residential and agricultural construction.

The enduring legacy of Gorenjska's forest-linked cultural heritage is not only preserved in static exhibitions at institutions like the Slovenian Alpine Museum (Mojstrana) and the Museum of Apiculture (Radovljica) but is also actively experienced through themed trails, workshops, open-air demonstrations, and heritage-based tourism initiatives. This rich cultural base presents significant opportunities for integration into sustainable tourism development, educational programs, and creative reinterpretation within frameworks like the Danube Wood Route.

2.2. Social and economic conditions in the region

Gorenjska is one of Slovenia's most developed and economically dynamic regions, benefiting from its strategic location along key Alpine corridors and proximity to Austria and Italy. It combines high environmental value with competitive economic sectors, particularly tourism, services, small-scale manufacturing, and the forest-based economy.

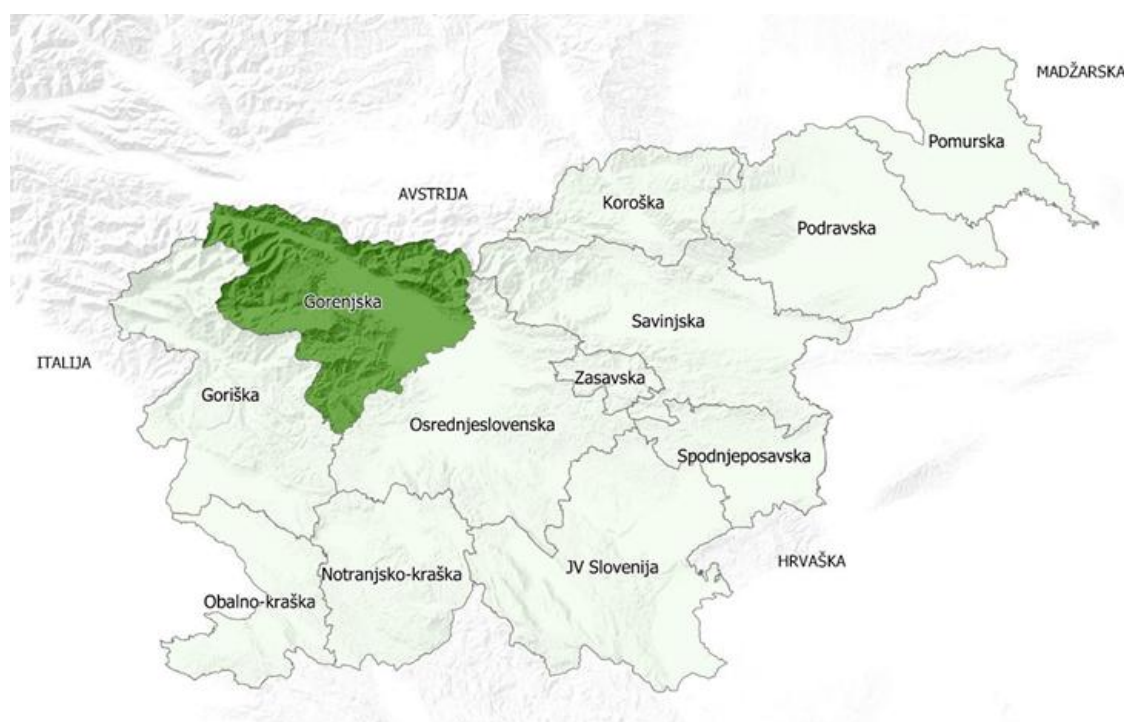
Table 1: Comparison of Selected Indicators for Gorenjska and Slovenia, year 2023

Indicator	Gorenjska Region	Slovenia (Total)
Area (km ²) - as of 1 January	2,137	20,271
Population - as of 1 July	209,324	2,120,937
Population density - as of 1 July (inhabitants/km ²)	98.0	104.6
Average age of population - as of 1 July	43.7 years	44.1 years
Total population growth (per 1,000 inhabitants)	-3.5	+3.3
Number of employed people (by place of work)	70,801	833,363
Employment rate (%)	71.7	69.3

GDP (EUR)	26.247	30.158
Average monthly net earnings (EUR)	€1,419.54	€1,445.12
Number of companies	23.159	228.994
Company revenue (€1,000)	€11,374,896	€167,559,026

Source: (SURS, 2025)

Figure 10: Gorenjska region in Slovenia



Source: GURS, 2025

Demographic Profile

In 2023, Gorenjska accounted for approximately 10% of Slovenia's population, with a population of 209,324 and a population density of 98 inhabitants per km², slightly below the national average of 104.6. The region maintains a relatively young demographic structure, with a mean age of 43.7 years—below the national average of 44.1—and a high share of the 0-14 age group (15.6%), signalling long-term demographic stability.

Although it experienced a negative natural population growth of -1.1 per 1,000 inhabitants and a net migration rate of -2.5, the region still boasts the highest life expectancy for women (85.1 years)

and the third highest for men (79.5 years) in Slovenia. Education levels are high: 34.3% of the population aged 25-64 have tertiary education—second only to the Osrednjeslovenska region.

Labour Market and Economy

The employment rate in Gorenjska stood at 71.7% in 2023, surpassing the national average (69.3%) and reflecting strong labour market participation. The region’s unemployment rate was a low 3.2%, positioning it among the most economically robust regions in Slovenia. However, nearly 29% of employed residents commute to other regions for work, predominantly to the capital Ljubljana.

Average monthly net earnings amounted to EUR 1,420—1.8% below the national average. The regional GDP per capita was EUR 26,247, about 13% lower than Slovenia’s average, though productivity and sectoral diversity remain high. Over 23,000 enterprises are registered in Gorenjska, employing approximately 84,100 people, primarily in the fields of tourism, metal processing, logistics, and IT.

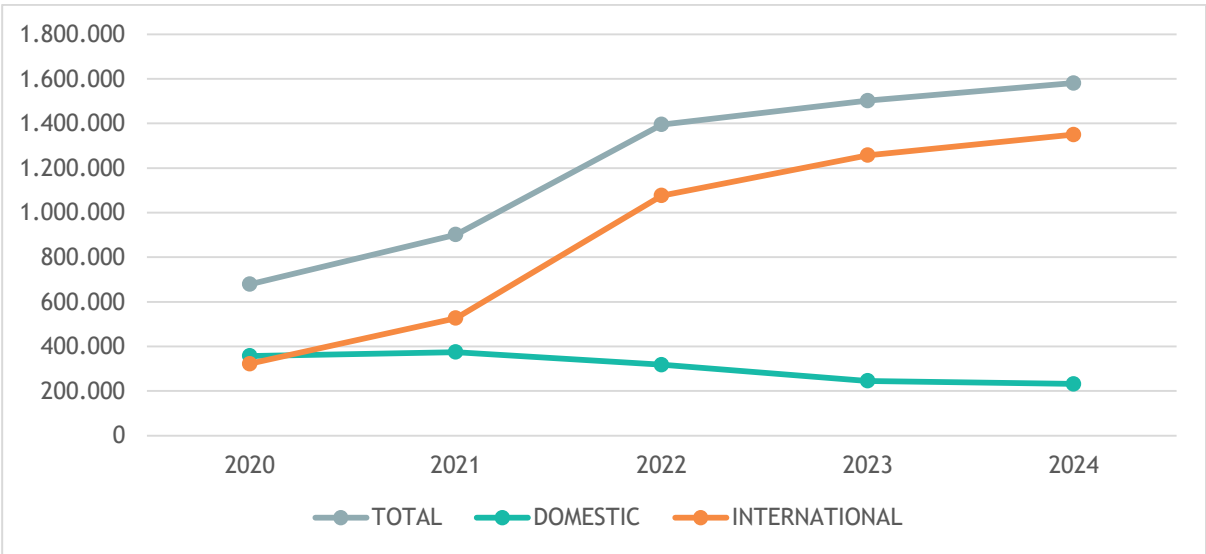
Quality of Life and Social Indicators

Gorenjska residents reported the highest life satisfaction in the country, with an average score of 8.0/10. The region had the lowest severe material deprivation rate (0.5%) and the lowest risk of social exclusion (10.5%). Furthermore, 99% of households could afford a meat or equivalent vegetarian meal every second day—the highest share nationally.

Tourism and Regional Potential

Gorenjska is Slovenia’s leading region for tourism, accounting for 24% of all tourist arrivals in 2024. With 1.5 million arrivals (of which over 1.3 million were international) and more than 3.9 million overnight stays, the region's natural and cultural assets play a key economic role. The Alpine scenery, traditional heritage, and sustainable tourism infrastructure make Gorenjska a core destination for both domestic and foreign visitors.

Figure 11: Number of domestic and international tourist in Gorenjska region, (2020 - 2024)



Source: (SURS, 2025)

The region's economic strategy focuses on promoting smart specialization (especially in metalworking and mobility), sustainable tourism, the green economy, digital transformation, and circular bioeconomy. It also supports innovation in the wood-processing and forestry sector (BSC Kranj, 2022)—directly aligned with the objectives of the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route.

2.3. Woodworking in Gorenjska

Gorenjska's woodworking tradition is strongly linked to its Alpine geography and historical use of timber in vernacular architecture. The region is known for its characteristic wooden hayracks (kozolci), beehive panels (panjske končnice), shepherd's culture, and wood as an essential element in Alpine houses (ganki, carved balconies, and wooden shingles). These cultural elements reflect the longstanding integration of wood into everyday life and local identity.

Gorenjska boasts a vibrant and diverse woodworking industry that skilfully combines tradition and modernity. Several established companies anchor this industrial landscape. Among them, LIP Bled specializes in the production of wooden doors and components. M Sora, based in Žiri, is internationally recognized for its production of energy-efficient wooden and wood-aluminium windows, reflecting a commitment to sustainable construction. In Železniki, Alples stands as one of Slovenia's largest furniture manufacturers, with a strong export orientation and a wide product range. Beyond these larger enterprises, the region is home to numerous small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and skilled artisans. These producers specialize in crafting custom-made furniture, decorative objects, and structural elements for timber construction. They commonly use locally sourced wood species such as spruce, fir, and beech, enhancing the sustainability and authenticity of their products.

In 2024, a total of 111 companies were active in the wood industry sector in the Gorenjska region. Among them, 62 companies operated under Division C16 - Manufacture of wood and of products of wood and cork, except furniture, and 49 companies under Division C31 - Manufacture of furniture. These companies employed 1,408 people (1,019 in Division C16 and 389 in Division C31), representing 6.2% of the total workforce in the Gorenjska region. In the same year, these companies generated 4.5% of the region's total net revenues, and 1.2% of net revenues from foreign markets (AJ PES, 2025).

The woodworking sector is also closely linked with tourism development in Gorenjska. Innovations in this field are evident in infrastructure such as Hotel Bohinj and Alpik Chalets, both of which embody sustainable architectural principles. These facilities showcase the use of local wood materials and traditional alpine aesthetics, serving as exemplary models of how tourism and local wood culture can be successfully integrated.

The institutional framework supporting sustainable forestry and wood processing in Gorenjska is well-established and closely aligned with national strategies for forest management and green economic development. The Slovenian Forest Service (Zavod za gozdove Slovenije), through its regional unit OE Bled, plays a central role in forest planning, issuing felling permits, and implementing sustainable forest management practices. This institutional oversight ensures that timber harvesting is conducted responsibly, aligning economic use with ecological conservation.

A key operational partner in the region is GG Bled, a regional forestry company founded in 1948, which carries out a wide range of forest-related activities including timber extraction, maintenance of forest infrastructure, and construction of forest roads. The company also contributes to local employment and maintains a long-standing tradition of forestry excellence in the Alpine environment.

The educational ecosystem and public engagement in Gorenjska further strengthen this institutional base. Educational institutions, such as the Biotechnical Centre Naklo and the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology at the University of Ljubljana, support knowledge transfer and skills development in the wood sector. The Slovenian Alpine Museum in Mojstrana provides an interactive platform for visitors to explore the cultural and ecological significance of alpine wood use, traditional building techniques, and life in the mountains. Similarly, the Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica presents the unique wooden architecture associated with traditional beekeeping, such as the famed panjske končnice (painted beehive panels), highlighting the deep link between woodworking, biodiversity, and folk heritage.

These institutions play a vital role in raising awareness, especially among younger generations, about the value of forests and wood as a cultural and ecological asset. Their programs include exhibitions, guided tours, educational workshops, and collaborations with schools and local communities. In doing so, they help preserve intangible heritage while fostering a culture of sustainability.

Together, the coordinated efforts of forestry institutions, cultural centers, and educational organizations create a strong foundation for Gorenjska's active participation in the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route. They ensure that wood-related heritage is not only preserved but actively interpreted, innovated, and passed on to future generations.

Strategic Importance and Revival of the Industry

Slovenia, and particularly the Gorenjska region, has witnessed a significant revival in its woodworking and wood-processing industries in recent years. This resurgence is rooted in the strategic importance of forestry and the wood value chain, which are integral to sustainable development, circular economy initiatives, and green job creation.

Wood-processing is one of Slovenia's most promising sectors. With forests covering over 62% of the country's territory and sustainable management practices firmly in place, Slovenia boasts a rich supply of high-quality raw material. The Slovenian woodworking industry generates approximately EUR 1.4 billion in annual revenue and employs around 12,700 people, accounting for 12% of the national manufacturing sector.

Slovenia's long-term vision for the sector, as set out in the Implementation Document for the Development of the Wood Processing Industry until 2030 (MGRT, 2022), includes:

- Technological modernization and digitalization.
- Strengthened cooperation between businesses, academia, and research institutions.
- Improved supply chains and logistics.
- Enhanced domestic processing of Slovenian wood.

The long-term vision emphasizes innovation, increased added value, and better use of domestic timber resources. National funding, EU support, and sectoral cooperation have become key levers to transform the sector. The Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport has introduced targeted measures aimed at boosting competitiveness and increasing added value through technological modernization. In 2024, approximately EUR 16 million (including EUR 14 million from EU funds) were allocated to support the industry.

Slovenia is increasingly investing in high-tech wood processing, sustainable construction (e.g., wooden prefabricated houses), and the development of new wood-based materials. Companies like

Lumar and iQwood exemplify this transformation by combining traditional values with cutting-edge technology. Their collaboration signals a return to domestic wood processing, emphasizing value-added products instead of raw material exports.

Efforts to promote the wood sector among youth are intensifying. Through events like the "Day of Slovenian Wood Industry," the government and stakeholders raise awareness of career opportunities and innovation potential in the wood value chain. Internationalization is also a key priority, supported by platforms such as SPIRIT Slovenia (SPIRIT, 2025).

Despite positive trends, the woodworking industry faces several challenges, including fragmented forest ownership, labour shortages, and competition from imported wood products. However, the demand for sustainable, bio-based materials and the rise of green building standards presents major opportunities.

In summary, woodworking in Gorenjska and Slovenia is not only a nod to tradition, but a forward-looking sector poised to drive sustainable development and regional prosperity through innovation and strategic investment.

2.4. Summary of the regional assessment

The Gorenjska region of Slovenia demonstrates a strong foundation for the development of the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route, rooted in its outstanding forest coverage, rich biodiversity, and deep wood-related cultural traditions. As an Alpine region with high environmental value, nearly half of its territory is protected under Natura 2000, and large areas fall within the Triglav National Park and the UNESCO-designated Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve. The forests, predominantly composed of beech, spruce, fir, and larch, are sustainably managed and exhibit high annual increment and regeneration rates.

The woodworking and forest-based sectors are well integrated into the regional economy. With more than 12,700 employees and EUR 1.4 billion in annual revenue nationwide, Slovenia's wood industry is undergoing modernization. In Gorenjska, both legacy firms (e.g., LIP Bohinj, M Sora, Alples) and smaller SMEs innovate in wood processing, tourism infrastructure, and crafts. Strong institutional support is provided by the Slovenian Forest Service (OE Bled) and GG Bled. Public awareness is advanced through museums and educational initiatives.

The region's social and economic profile reflects a high quality of life, strong education levels, and low unemployment. It is a top destination for tourism, with 24% of all arrivals in Slovenia in 2024 occurring in Gorenjska. Tourism potential is further strengthened by the traditional Alpine architecture, intangible heritage (such as charcoal making and panjske končnice), and the appeal of wood-based sustainable tourism infrastructure.

However, the assessment also highlights challenges. Forest ownership is highly fragmented, hindering efficient forest planning and use. The aging artisan population and lack of younger successors put traditional woodworking knowledge at risk. Climate change, including bark beetle outbreaks and droughts, poses a growing threat to forest health. Interpretation of woodcraft heritage is often informal or lacking structure.

Despite these challenges, the region shows great potential for further integration of forest heritage into sustainable tourism. It is well-positioned to pilot new interpretive experiences, branding initiatives, and capacity-building actions aligned with EU sustainability and green innovation goals. Regional stakeholders exhibit a high level of readiness and interest in further developing the Danube

Wood(s) Cultural Route, with clear synergies between forest management, heritage preservation, and rural tourism.

2.5. Challenges and opportunities

The Gorenjska region holds substantial potential for the development of the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route due to its abundant forest landscapes, rich woodworking traditions, and cultural heritage embedded in the Alpine environment. However, the full valorisation of this potential requires addressing specific structural, cultural, and operational challenges that are unique to the region and not yet covered by national policies.

The following chapter summarises the challenges and opportunities identified in Regional Analysis.

A. Environmental and Forest Management

Challenges:

Gorenjska's forest ecosystem, while robust and biologically diverse, faces mounting environmental pressures. The effects of climate change—manifested through prolonged droughts, windthrow events, and bark beetle infestations—threaten forest vitality, carbon storage capacity, and timber quality. Moreover, the high degree of private forest ownership (over 75%) is characterized by small and fragmented parcels, complicating coherent forest management, infrastructure development, and implementation of sustainable silvicultural practices. These structural limitations hinder long-term planning and joint action on issues such as biodiversity protection and climate resilience.

Opportunities:

Despite these threats, Gorenjska's well-preserved forests and increasing societal awareness of environmental sustainability present a valuable opportunity. Through the development of collaborative forest management schemes, supported by the Slovenian Forest Service and regional forestry offices (e.g., GG Bled), it is possible to promote more integrated planning. Financial incentives and technical support from EU and national rural development programs can facilitate active participation of private forest owners. Furthermore, ecosystem-based adaptation measures and the promotion of climate-resilient tree species can enhance forest stability. A growing interest in forest ecosystem services—including carbon credits, eco-tourism, and biodiversity conservation—opens pathways for new green value chains.

B. Knowledge Transfer and Education

Challenges:

The transmission of traditional skills in woodworking, forest use, and rural craftsmanship is endangered by an aging practitioner base and limited interest among younger generations. Educational institutions often lack dedicated programs that integrate forestry, cultural heritage, and tourism in a holistic way. Vocational curricula remain predominantly technical, with insufficient emphasis on the socio-cultural or creative aspects of wood. Consequently, both the forestry and woodworking sectors suffer from workforce shortages and a skills mismatch.

Opportunities:

Gorenjska is home to several institutions—such as the Slovenian Alpine Museum in Mojstrana and the Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica—that can function as platforms for experiential learning and intergenerational knowledge transfer. By strengthening partnerships between schools, museums, and SMEs, the region can offer hands-on apprenticeships, summer academies, and heritage-focused vocational training.

Key educational institutions in the region include the Biotechnical Centre Naklo (BIC Naklo), which offers programs in forestry, nature conservation, and rural development, and Šolski center Škofja Loka, which provides specialized training in wood technology, mechanical engineering, and construction. Both schools actively cooperate with local businesses and have infrastructure that supports practical training in sustainable land use and wood processing.

The promotion of wood-related professions through targeted campaigns (e.g., “crafts of the future”) and the integration of local cultural knowledge into formal curricula—such as vernacular architecture, traditional crafts, or biodiversity conservation—would not only preserve intangible heritage but also foster innovation and support youth employment in green sectors.

C. Cultural Heritage and Tourism Integration

Challenges:

Although Gorenjska boasts a rich wood-related cultural landscape—featuring elements such as hayracks (kozolci), traditional Alpine houses with ganki, and painted beehive panels (panjske končnice)—many heritage sites remain underinterpreted and poorly connected. The visibility of these assets is uneven; while flagship destinations like Lake Bled or Bohinj receive high tourist numbers, peripheral wood heritage sites lack adequate infrastructure, interpretive signage, or consistent accessibility. The potential of woodcraft as a thematic axis for tourism remains largely untapped.

Opportunities:

The Danube Wood(s) Route provides a strategic framework to valorize Gorenjska’s wood heritage by integrating cultural sites into coherent thematic routes and tourism products. Through improved storytelling, signage, and digital tools (e.g., mobile apps, QR-based trails), visitors can engage more deeply with local traditions. Successful examples such as Hotel Bohinj, Jasna Nature Chalet Resort and AlpiK Chalets demonstrate how sustainable architecture, and local materials can enrich the tourism experience. Replicating such models, alongside the development of forest-based experiences (e.g., charcoal burning demonstrations, hayrack tours, forest meditation and bathing), could establish Gorenjska as a flagship wood heritage destination.

D. Stakeholder Engagement and Branding

Challenges:

Cross-sectoral collaboration remains limited. Institutions and actors in forestry, tourism, education, and culture often operate in silos, reducing the potential for integrated planning or joint product development. Moreover, Gorenjska lacks a strong, unified regional brand that would connect its various wood-related assets under a single identity. Promotion efforts are fragmented and often fail to communicate the sustainability and cultural value of wood-based tourism.

Opportunities:

There is a strong foundation for building a shared regional brand around wood heritage, aligned with the values of sustainability, authenticity, and innovation. Local stakeholders—including businesses, municipalities, NGOs, and educational institutions—can benefit from facilitated dialogue and joint project development. The Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route offers a transnational platform for such alignment. By investing in coordinated marketing, joint interpretation standards, and collaborative events (e.g., regional wood festivals, thematic weeks), the region can enhance its visibility and competitiveness in domestic and international markets.

Figure 12: Identified challenges and opportunities

No.	Challenges	Opportunities
1	Fragmented forest ownership limits integrated forest planning and infrastructure development.	Promote joint forest management schemes and cooperative models for private forest owners.
2	Climate change impacts (bark beetles, storms, droughts) threaten forest resilience.	Support forest adaptation strategies and promote biodiversity through mixed-species planting.
3	Aging artisan and forestry workforce, low youth engagement.	Develop youth-oriented apprenticeship programs and integrate wood heritage in vocational curricula.
4	Insufficient focus on wood heritage in forestry education.	Create interdisciplinary programs linking forestry, culture, and tourism.
5	Underdeveloped interpretation and infrastructure at wood heritage sites.	Invest in interpretive centers, signage, and multilingual digital guides.
6	Lesser-known sites lack visibility and accessibility.	Develop thematic trails and marketing campaigns to highlight hidden heritage sites.
7	Limited cross-sector collaboration between forestry, tourism, culture, and education.	Establish regional partnerships and cross-sector action groups.
8	Weak branding of Gorenjska's wood-related assets.	Create a unified branding strategy for wood heritage tourism under the Danube Wood Route.

3. Strategic framework

The strategic framework of the Gorenjska Regional Action Plan (RAP) builds on a methodological structure that translates transnational objectives of the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route into region-specific actions. It ensures alignment with the Danube Wood(s) Strategy while directly addressing the distinct territorial needs and development priorities of the Gorenjska region.

The development of the Danube Wood(s) RAPs follows a clear methodology, as illustrated in the subsequent figure.

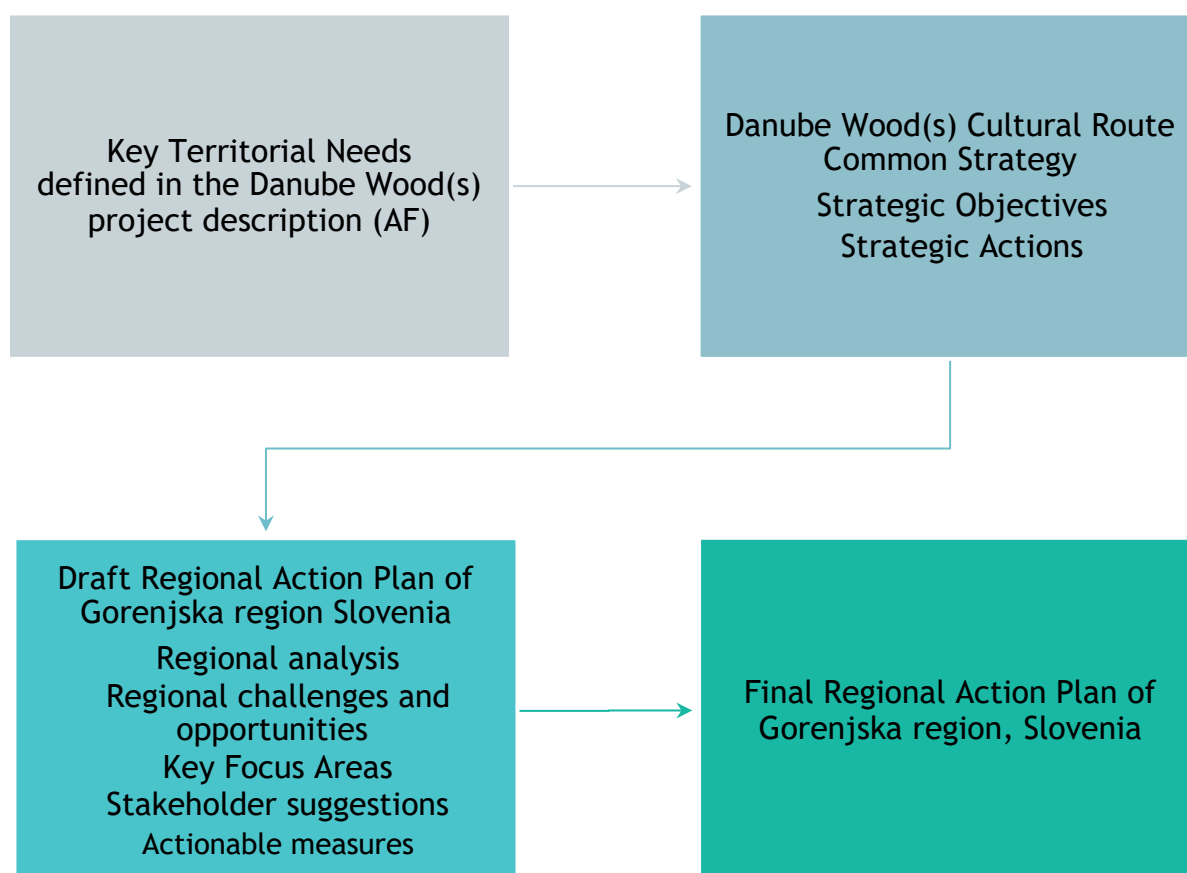


Figure 13: Development of the Regional Action Plan

In this RAP, particular emphasis is placed on regional needs that are not yet adequately addressed in national strategies or policy instruments. The focus is therefore on place-based, stakeholder-driven actions that fill gaps in heritage valorisation, green innovation, and regional coordination. Strategic directions are defined through four Key Focus Areas (KFAs), each grounded in SWOT analysis, project documentation, and participatory consultation with regional actors.

To ensure coherence and actionability, each KFA links:

- A specific territorial need derived from regional analysis, and application form of the Danube Wood(s) project.
- the corresponding Strategic Objectives of the Danube Wood(s) Strategy,
- a tailored set of strategic actions supporting implementation in Gorenjska region.

These areas were defined based on a bottom-up prioritisation of challenges and opportunities and serve as operational pillars for RAP implementation.

While the Gorenjska RAP reflects specific regional characteristics and addresses local gaps not covered by national frameworks, it remains fully aligned with the shared transnational goals of the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route. This ensures both coherence across regions and flexibility for local relevance.

To clearly define the scope of action, the following framework explains the correspondence between the overall Danube Wood(s) project objectives, the strategic priorities of the Danube Wood(s) Route Strategy, and the specific focus of this RAP. In the next section, concrete action

proposals will be developed for each of the defined Key Focus Areas, ensuring a direct translation of strategic priorities into implementable regional measures.

Figure 14: Strategic framework of the Gorenjska region Regional Action Plan (RAP)

Key Territorial Need	Danube Wood(s) Strategy Objective	Strategic Actions (from Strategy)	RAP Key Focus Area
Limited youth involvement and outdated vocational training systems in wood-related fields, leading to declining intergenerational transmission of wood-related skills.	SO3 - Valorize Cultural Heritage: Promote traditional knowledge transfer SO5 - Raise Awareness and Engagement: Engage young generations in wood culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Campaigns • Educational Programs • Digital Awareness Programs • Community Workshops • Public Information Platforms 	Intergenerational Knowledge and Skills Transfer for Wood Culture
Underutilized wood-related cultural heritage lacks visibility, interpretation, and systematic promotion.	SO3 - Valorize Cultural Heritage: Integrate wood-related heritage in tourism SO4 - Develop Sustainable Tourism: Promote sustainable tourism offers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Traditional Craftsmanship • Cultural Tourism Initiatives • Develop Heritage Centres • Thematic Guided Tours • Promotion and Integrated Tourism Packages 	Interpretation and Sustainable Use of Wood-Based Cultural Assets
Need for coordinated cross-sector cooperation and a unified regional identity for wood-related assets.	SO3 - Valorize Cultural Heritage: Build stakeholder networks SO5 - Raise Awareness and Engagement: Coordinate branding and outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder Collaboration Forums • Annual Festivals and Events • Joint Marketing and Branding Campaigns • Coordinated Interpretation Standards 	Regional Cooperation and Branding for Wood Heritage Visibility
Low use of local wood in construction and design; lack of technical guidance for eco-construction in tourism and housing.	SO1 - Preserve Biodiversity: Support sustainable land use SO2 - Develop a Sustainable Forest-Based Economy: Encourage eco-friendly wood industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Sustainable Forestry Practices • Foster Research and Innovation in Wood-Based Construction • Develop Technical Guidelines for Local Wood Use • Support Local Green Entrepreneurship 	Green Innovation and Sustainable Use of Wood in Local Economy

Detailed Overview of Key Focus Areas (KFAs)

To further clarify the role and intended scope of each Key Focus Area (KFA), the following section provides a detailed description. Each KFA is grounded in specific territorial needs and explicitly aligned with the strategic objectives and actions of the Danube Wood(s) Strategy. This elaboration

serves as a narrative complement to the summary table above and supports the formulation of targeted measures in the subsequent implementation chapter.

1. Intergenerational Knowledge and Skills Transfer for Wood Culture

This Key Focus Area addresses the erosion of traditional knowledge and the weak engagement of youth in forestry, woodworking, and cultural crafts. It builds on the region's educational and institutional assets and proposes a revival of wood-related vocations through hands-on learning, creative education formats, and intergenerational transmission. The focus is on partnerships between schools, museums, craftspeople, and SMEs to create a sustainable skills pipeline. It contributes to the strategic objective of valorising cultural heritage (SO3) by preserving intangible skills and practices, and to raising awareness and engagement (SO5) by involving young people in the cultural and environmental narratives of the region.

2. Interpretation and Sustainable Use of Wood-Based Cultural Assets

Despite Gorenjska's rich wooden heritage, many assets remain underused and poorly interpreted. This Key Focus Area supports the development of accessible and engaging tourism products that highlight wood heritage in an authentic and sustainable manner. It combines cultural storytelling, digital innovation, and spatial planning to bring coherence to fragmented wood-related destinations. It supports the strategic objective of valorising cultural heritage (SO3) by enhancing the interpretation and experience of wood-related sites and practices, and the objective of developing sustainable tourism (SO4) through integrated, low-impact tourism offers.

3. Regional Cooperation and Branding for Wood Heritage Visibility

Stronger cross-sector collaboration is needed to unlock the full potential of Gorenjska's wood-related assets. This Key Focus Area aims to create a unified regional identity for wood culture, facilitating cooperation across forestry, tourism, and education sectors. It also addresses the lack of coordinated marketing, joint interpretation frameworks, and regionally branded experiences. It contributes to the strategic objective of valorising cultural heritage (SO3) by uniting stakeholders around shared narratives and assets, and to raising awareness and engagement (SO5) through outreach and collective promotion.

4. Green Innovation and Sustainable Use of Wood in the Local Economy

This Key Focus Area focuses on activating local wood resources in a sustainable and climate-resilient way. It promotes eco-construction using local wood, support for green entrepreneurship, and pilot projects in the circular economy. Gorenjska's best practices (e.g., eco-tourism architecture) will serve as models for wider application, with technical guidance and stakeholder support mechanisms. It addresses the strategic objective of preserving biodiversity (SO1) by supporting environmentally conscious land and resource use, and of developing a sustainable forest-based economy (SO2) by fostering innovation and value-added use of wood.

4. Actionable measures

This section presents actionable measures developed under each of the four Key Focus Areas (KFAs) identified in the Strategic Framework of the Gorenjska Regional Action Plan (RAP). These measures respond directly to territorial needs, align with the Danube Wood(s) Strategy, and reflect input from local stakeholders. The listed actions are designed to be pragmatic, scalable, and complementary to existing national or regional programs, with a clear emphasis on intersectoral cooperation,

innovation, and community involvement. The measures are designed for implementation during and beyond the project lifecycle, depending on available resources and stakeholder engagement.

The following tables showcase in two different ways the identified actionable measures in Gorenjska region. Two of these measures will be elaborated further, based on the stakeholder reviews, and suggestions.

Figure 15: Actionable Measures addressing the identified challenges

RAP Key Focus Area	Actionable Measures
<p>Intergenerational Knowledge and Skills Transfer for Wood Culture</p> <p><i>Development of apprenticeship programs, experiential learning formats, heritage-based education, and youth-focused campaigns in collaboration with regional schools and cultural institutions.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop apprenticeship and mentorship programs linking retired artisans with youth. • Integrate wood heritage into vocational school curricula in cooperation with regional institutions. • Organize summer academies and woodcraft workshops for students and young professionals. • Launch awareness campaigns promoting wood-based professions among youth. • Support intergenerational learning initiatives at museums and cultural centers.
<p>Interpretation and Sustainable Use of Wood-Based Cultural Assets</p> <p><i>Creation of thematic trails, signage and digital interpretation, integration of traditional wood architecture into tourism products, and demonstration of best practices in eco-tourism infrastructure.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create thematic interpretive trails connecting key wood heritage sites across the region. • Install multilingual signage and QR-based digital content for self-guided visitor experiences. • Develop tourism products that highlight traditional wood architecture and crafts. • Identify and document best practices in eco-friendly heritage renovation. • Organize training sessions for tourism providers on sustainable use of cultural assets.
<p>Regional Cooperation and Branding for Wood Heritage Visibility</p> <p><i>Stakeholder networks, joint marketing, coordinated interpretation standards, and regional events to promote visibility and cooperation across forestry, tourism, and cultural sectors.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a cross-sectoral working group on wood heritage and tourism promotion. • Develop a unified branding concept for wood-based tourism in Gorenjska. • Coordinate and co-finance regional wood festivals and cultural weeks. • Launch a joint marketing campaign targeting domestic and foreign tourists. • Create shared interpretation guidelines for museums, tourism offices, and forest trails.
<p>Green Innovation and Sustainable Use of Wood in Local Economy</p> <p><i>Technical guidance and pilot initiatives for the use of local wood in eco-construction (e.g., chalets, glamping), circular economy solutions, carbon-conscious business models, and architectural handbooks for sustainable renovation.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop technical guidelines for the use of local wood in eco-construction and renovation. • Organize workshops on sustainable architecture and wood-based design for tourism infrastructure. • Support pilot projects that demonstrate circular use of wood in hospitality and public spaces. • Promote sustainable forest certification schemes and wood traceability. • Facilitate networking between forestry, construction, and creative industries.

Figure 16: Actionable measures building on Strategic Actions

Strategic Action	Actionable Measures
SO1 - Promote Sustainable Forestry Practices	Promote sustainable forest certification schemes and wood traceability.
SO2 - Foster Research and Innovation in	Develop technical guidelines for the use of local

Strategic Action	Actionable Measures
Wood-Based Construction	wood in eco-construction and renovation. Support pilot projects that demonstrate circular use of wood in hospitality and public spaces. Facilitate networking between forestry, construction, and creative industries.
SO2 - Support Local Green Entrepreneurship	Organize workshops on sustainable architecture and wood-based design for tourism infrastructure.
SO3 - Promote Traditional Craftsmanship	Develop tourism products that highlight traditional wood architecture and crafts.
SO3 - Establish Strong Regional Networks Among Key Stakeholders	Establish a cross-sectoral working group on wood heritage and tourism promotion. Facilitate networking between forestry, construction, and creative industries.
SO3 - Develop Heritage Centres	Identify and document best practices in eco-friendly heritage renovation.
SO3 - Promote Local Crafts	Organize training sessions for tourism providers on sustainable use of cultural assets. Support intergenerational learning initiatives at museums and cultural centers.
SO4 - Creation of the Cultural Route	Create thematic interpretive trails connecting key wood heritage sites across the region.
SO4 - Unified Branding and Design	Develop a unified branding concept for wood-based tourism in Gorenjska.
SO4 - Cultural Tourism Products	Develop tourism products that highlight traditional wood architecture and crafts.
SO4 - Thematic Guided Tours	Install multilingual signage and QR-based digital content for self-guided visitor experiences.
SO4 - Promotion and Integrated Tourism Packages	Launch a joint marketing campaign targeting domestic and foreign tourists.
SO4 - Capacity Building for Tourism Stakeholders	Organize training sessions for tourism providers on sustainable use of cultural assets.
SO5 - Educational Campaigns	Launch awareness campaigns promoting wood-based professions among youth.
SO5 - Educational Programs	Integrate wood heritage into vocational school curricula in cooperation with regional institutions. Organize summer academies and woodcraft workshops for students and young professionals.
SO5 - Community Workshops	Support intergenerational learning initiatives at museums and cultural centers.
SO5 - Public Information Platforms	Install multilingual signage and QR-based digital content for self-guided visitor experiences. Create shared interpretation guidelines for museums, tourism offices, and forest trails.
SO5 - Stakeholder Collaboration Forums	Establish a cross-sectoral working group on wood heritage and tourism promotion.
SO5 - Annual Festivals and Events	Coordinate and co-finance regional wood festivals and cultural weeks.
SO5 - Joint Marketing and Branding Campaigns	Launch a joint marketing campaign targeting domestic and foreign tourists.
SO5 - Coordinated Interpretation Standards	Create shared interpretation guidelines for museums, tourism offices, and forest trails.
SO3 - Educational Programs (duplicate category)	Develop apprenticeship and mentorship programs linking retired artisans with youth.

The next section is a structured elaboration of the two actions, which were selected based on stakeholder suggestions for short-term feasibility and maximising long-term effect.

The implementation of selected actions within the Gorenjska Regional Action Plan (RAP) will be strategically supported by outputs developed through project activities under Work Package 2 of the Danube Wood(s) project—namely, Activity 2.1 - Trainings and Activity 2.2 - Innovation Toolbox. While these outputs are formally part of transnational project deliverables, their thematic focus—empowerment, capacity building, and innovation in the valorisation of wood heritage—provides a natural foundation for piloting their use within the RAP framework.

In particular:

The training module on storytelling and interpretation of wood heritage, developed and implemented within Activity 2.1, will support Action 1 by equipping regional guides, cultural actors, and tourism providers with the skills required to animate and interpret the newly proposed Wood Heritage Itinerary within the Juliana Trail. These guides will be directly engaged in the delivery of interpretive content and visitor experiences along the trail.

The Innovation Toolbox, created under Activity 2.2, will contribute both conceptually and practically to Action 2 by providing methodological tools for integrating wood-based cultural heritage into existing tourism infrastructure. The approach includes:

- Co-creation with local stakeholders,
- Templates for site selection, interpretation design, and digital engagement,
- A model for community-based cultural route development.

The toolbox will be piloted and tested through the implementation of the wood-themed itinerary as a regional demonstrator of good practice.

This alignment ensures that project resources are used efficiently and that the RAP builds on pre-existing knowledge, while also contributing to the scaling and validation of project results. It strengthens the logic of transnational-regional transfer and allows the Gorenjska region to take a leadership role in piloting integrated heritage valorisation in tourism.

4.1. Action 1 - Development of Wood Heritage Thematic Route within Juliana Hiking Trail

4.1.1. *Relevance of the measure*

The Gorenjska region possesses an exceptionally rich wood-related cultural heritage, visible in traditional architecture (e.g., hayracks, Alpine wooden houses with ganki), centuries-old forestry practices, and strong community-based craftsmanship. Many of these sites were mapped during the Danube Wood(s) project. However, their interpretation and visibility remain limited, particularly in peripheral areas beyond the main tourism hubs such as Bled or Bohinj. These unique assets are often underexplored in the context of structured tourism products and do not reach their full potential for storytelling and visitor engagement.

At the same time, the Juliana Trail, a long-distance circular hiking route established in the Julian Alps (Skupnost Julijskih Alp, 2025), provides an existing, high-quality outdoor infrastructure that connects diverse natural and cultural landscapes of the Julian Alps. Building on this platform offers a unique opportunity to integrate lesser-known cultural wood sites into an already popular tourism product. It represents an excellent platform for integrating additional thematic content without the need for heavy new infrastructural investments. By developing a dedicated wood heritage thematic route within this framework, the region can highlight traditional wood-based knowledge, crafts, and living heritage in a way that complements existing offers and extends visitor experiences beyond the most visited destinations (e.g., Bled, Bohinj, Kranjska Gora).

This approach also responds directly to emerging trends in slow and experiential tourism, which prioritize authentic encounters, local stories, and hands-on experiences. It provides opportunities for diversifying the regional economy, supporting smaller craft businesses, and involving local communities in co-creation and maintenance.

The integration of a Wood Heritage Thematic Route into the Juliana Trail will address multiple goals: enhancing cultural visibility, fostering sustainable tourism, involving local communities, and supporting the implementation of the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route on a pilot basis.

Moreover, this action strengthens Gorenjska's role as a model region for cultural sustainability within the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route and significantly increases the regional and international visibility of its wood heritage.

4.1.2. Nature of the action

This action aims to develop a new thematic hiking itinerary fully embedded within the Juliana Trail network, focusing on sites of wood-related cultural significance mapped during the Danube Wood(s) project.

Figure 17: Juliana Trail overall tour



Source: (Skupnost Julijske Alpe, 2025)

The design and implementation of this thematic route will follow a structured methodology for integrating wood culture into tourism products. This includes clearly defined criteria for

selecting relevant sites, approaches for developing interpretive content, strategies for involving local communities, and guidelines for establishing a coherent visual identity of the route.

Through cooperation with the Julian Alps Association (coordinated by Bohinj Tourism Board), local municipalities, cultural and forestry institutions, local craftspeople, tourism stakeholders and students, the route will include a curated sequence of heritage stops linked to traditional architecture, forestry practices, artisan knowledge, and symbolic wood culture, and offer visitors a curated experience that highlights woodcraft traditions, historic forest-related sites, and authentic community stories.

Interpretation will be enhanced through physical signage and digital tools such as QR codes, maps, and mobile-friendly materials. The action will also feature a pilot launch event and serve as a replicable model for other regions within the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route framework.

4.1.3. Activities performed under the Action

The action is designed as a stepwise, participatory, and community-based process that builds on existing Juliana Trail infrastructure and the inventory prepared within the Danube Wood(s) project. It ensures a balanced integration of new interpretive content and physical elements while actively involving local stakeholders throughout each phase. The main activities are outlined below as a structured sequence of steps, providing an overview before detailed methodological descriptions.

Main activities (overview):

- Selection and mapping of key wood heritage sites along the Juliana Trail.
- Development of interpretive content (storytelling scripts, legends, educational panels).
- Design and integration of signage and trail infrastructure into the existing network, including Danube Wood(s) route branding.
- Enhancement of digital materials and online interactive tools within the Juliana Trail framework.
- Training of local certified guides for the Julian Alps.
- Pilot testing and refinement of the thematic route.
- Presentation of the route to other regional stakeholders at a final event.

Detailed description and methodology

The action will start with the selection and mapping of key wood heritage sites situated along or near the Juliana Trail. The initial selection will be based on the inventory developed during the Danube Wood(s) project. However, to ensure local ownership and potentially uncover additional sites of value, a dedicated workshop with regional stakeholders (including cultural institutions, local experts, and municipalities) will be held to validate and, if needed, expand this inventory.

For the development of interpretive content, an iterative co-creation approach will be used. Storytelling scripts, legends, and educational panels will be created in collaboration with local experts and cultural actors, integrating scientific, historical, and community-based knowledge. The content will be designed to complement existing Juliana Trail narratives and strengthen its cultural depth rather than replace or duplicate them.

The design and integration of signage and infrastructure will strictly adhere to the visual identity of the Juliana Trail. Thematic signage, information boards, and interpretive points will

be harmoniously integrated into existing trail infrastructure (e.g., signposts, resting areas, viewpoints). Additionally, Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route branding elements will be included to reinforce the transnational dimension and connect the route to the wider network of wood heritage destinations.

In terms of digital presence, enhancement of existing online platforms and tools will be prioritized. Interactive maps, QR code-based storytelling, and mobile-friendly content layers will be added to the Juliana Trail's official digital channels, ensuring visitors can access enriched experiences without requiring parallel systems.

A focused training for local certified guides of the Julian Alps will be carried out. This training module will be integrated into the official annual guide certification program organized by the Vocational College for Catering and Tourism Bled (VSŠ Bled). This ensures that professional guides are well-equipped to deliver wood heritage interpretation in a consistent and engaging manner.

A pilot testing phase will be conducted before the official presentation of the route. Selected groups, including hiking clubs, schools, and tourism professionals, will experience the new thematic sections through guided and self-guided tours. Structured feedback will be collected to assess clarity, narrative attractiveness, and overall visitor satisfaction. The results will inform final adjustments to improve the route's quality and appeal.

Finally, a dedicated final event will be organized to present the thematic route to broader regional stakeholders (municipalities, tourism boards, local businesses). While no specific training for these actors will be provided, this event will serve as a comprehensive capacity-building opportunity where participants will receive all relevant information, promotional materials, and instructions on how to integrate and support the route in their own activities.

By following this incremental, community-driven, and integrative methodology, the action will create a meaningful thematic layer on the Juliana Trail that promotes wood heritage while respecting existing structures. This enhances both local engagement and the international visibility of Gorenjska's unique wood culture.

4.1.4. Potential Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route points involved

The wood heritage thematic route within the Juliana Trail will include the following key sites and attractions, as identified in the Danube Wood(s) Strategy templates:

- Andrej's Mill and Venetian Sawmill, Bohinj. Guided tours and live demonstrations of traditional milling techniques and water-powered sawmill operation, illustrating the historic role of wood in local rural life.
- Oplen House Museum, Studor. A traditional 19th-century Bohinj farmhouse museum showcasing rural life, with a strong emphasis on the use of wood in domestic architecture and construction.
- Slovenski Planinski Muzej (Slovene Mountaineering Museum), Mojstrana. Exhibitions on Slovenian mountaineering heritage, highlighting wooden alpine huts, traditional tools, and symbolic use of wood in mountain culture.
- Beehouse with painted panels (panjske končnice). Sites featuring authentic wooden beehouses with folk art panels, demonstrating the intersection of woodworking and apiculture.
- Pletna boat workshops and rides, Lake Bled. Experiences with traditional wooden flat-bottom boats unique to Lake Bled, including learning about the handmade boat construction and special rowing technique.

- Gorjuška fajfa (Gorjuše pipe). Presentation and demonstration of handcrafted wooden pipes with mother-of-pearl inlays, showcasing a rare local artisan tradition.
- The Iron Trail, Pokljuka. A historic hiking trail with archaeological sites and educational signage focused on forest and cultural history.
- Studor hayracks ("toplarji"). A landscape of traditional double hayracks, representing iconic Slovenian rural wooden architecture.
- Pocar Homestead, Triglav National Park. An original alpine farmhouse that presents traditional timber craftsmanship and rural alpine life through permanent exhibitions.
- Traditional handmade wooden butter moulds. Workshops demonstrating carving techniques and folk symbolism in dairy heritage, representing intangible woodcraft traditions.
- Charcoal burning (oglarjenje). Demonstrations of traditional charcoal burning techniques, presenting the connection between wood use, forest management, and rural life.
- Liznjek Homestead, Kranjska Gora. A museum highlighting traditional wooden construction, interior design, and rural lifestyle of the Upper Sava Valley.
- Kajžnik House, Rateče. An ethnographic museum set in a traditional alpine house, including an innovative escape room that introduces local woodcraft heritage in an engaging way.
- Melodije gozda (Melodies of the Forest). An immersive guided forest experience designed as a multi-sensory journey through the sounds and energy of the forest, blending local stories, music, and mindfulness. Recognized as one of Slovenia's top authentic experiences, it highlights the emotional and cultural value of woodlands beyond material use.

In addition to cultural sites and interpretation points, the route will highlight exemplary tourism accommodations that demonstrate the innovative and sustainable use of local wood in architecture and hospitality concepts, namely:

- Hotel Bohinj. A sustainably designed hotel in Bohinj, emphasizing local wood in architecture and interiors, inspired by traditional alpine building methods.
- Jasna Nature Chalet Resort, Kranjska Gora. Chalets and glamping units built primarily from local timber, combining modern design with alpine heritage.
- Alpink Chalets, Ukanc (Bohinj). Eco-friendly chalets using local wood, designed in harmony with the forest landscape and emphasizing simplicity and natural materials.

4.1.5. Stakeholders involved

The successful implementation of the wood heritage thematic route within the Juliana Trail will be driven by a strong network of regional and national stakeholders who bring complementary expertise, resources, and deep-rooted local knowledge.

At the core is the **Julian Alps Association, managed by Tourist Board Bohinj**, which coordinates all local tourist boards across the Julian Alps region. This association will lead the integration of the new wood heritage thematic content into the existing Juliana Trail framework, ensuring strategic alignment with regional tourism development goals and enhancing the trail's overall offer.

Local municipalities, including Bohinj, Bled, Kranjska Gora, and others along the trail, will support infrastructural improvements, help facilitate community consultations, and align activities with local cultural and spatial development strategies.

Triglav National Park (TNP), as the central protected area and a key guardian of natural and cultural landscapes in the Julian Alps, will provide expert guidance on nature conservation, sustainable visitor management, and integration of wood heritage interpretation into protected areas.

Cultural and heritage institutions will provide crucial curatorial expertise, contribute to the development of interpretive storytelling, and help design engaging educational materials. These institutions safeguard key knowledge of the tangible and intangible wood-related traditions that form the backbone of this thematic route.

Forestry organizations, local craftsmen and their associations will play an important role in maintaining authenticity and connecting visitors to traditional skills and stories. Their involvement will include sharing practical knowledge, supporting demonstrations, and participating in community workshops to co-create content and experiences.

The Vocational College for Catering, Wellness and Tourism Bled, which delivers annual training programs for certified Julian Alps guides, will incorporate new thematic content on wood heritage into its curriculum, equipping local guides with the skills and narratives needed to interpret and promote the route effectively.

Tourism service providers and local entrepreneurs, including innovative accommodations such as Hotel Bohinj, Jasna Chalet Resort, and Alpič Chalets, will contribute by showcasing best practices in sustainable wood use, serving as model examples, and potentially offering spaces for interpretive stops or pilot experiences.

Additionally, the **Regional Development Agency BSC Kranj** will provide strategic support in stakeholder coordination, capacity-building activities, and linking this initiative with broader regional development and innovation agendas.

Through this cross-sectoral and community-based approach, the action aims to foster strong regional ownership, encourage knowledge sharing, and ensure that the new thematic route is deeply embedded in the social and cultural fabric of the Gorenjska region, enhancing long-term sustainability and visibility of wood heritage.

4.1.6. Timeframe

- Initial mapping and community consultations: 3 months
- Content and interpretive design: 3 months
- Infrastructure and signage installation: 4 months
- Pilot testing and adjustments: 6 months
- Official promotion and operational launch: 1 month (with continuation)

This action is designed to continue and grow beyond the official project timeline, with ongoing use, maintenance, and promotion of the thematic route by regional stakeholders.

4.1.7. Indicative costs

Signage and on-site infrastructure (design, production, installation): 8,000 EUR

Digital materials and promotion (updates to online platforms, QR codes, route maps): 4,000 EUR

Pilot testing (refreshments and basic logistics for approx. 20 participants): 1,000 EUR

Final launch event (venue rental, catering, logistics for approx. 50 people): 3,000 EUR

Total indicative cost: ~16,000 EUR

4.1.8. Output and result indicators

Number of sites included in the thematic route: 8 - 10

Number of workshops for content validation and stakeholder engagement: 2

Number of workshop participants (total): 30

Number of pilot testing participants: 15

Number of local guides trained within the Julian Alps certified guide program: 10

Number of local stakeholders engaged at the final event: 50

Number of promotional campaigns or media features about the new thematic route: 3

New thematic route officially launched and promoted: 1

4.2. Action 2 - Co-creation of Innovative Wood-Based Souvenirs for the "Bohinjsko" Collective Brand

4.2.1. Relevance of the measure

Woodcraft traditions have deep roots in Gorenjska and form an essential part of the region's cultural and economic identity. The skillful use of local wood in daily life – from practical household items and farm tools to decorative crafts – represents a living heritage that embodies authenticity, sustainability, and artisanal excellence. However, many high-quality wooden products remain under-recognized and underutilized in the tourism economy.

By integrating wood-based products into collective destination brands, the region can support local artisans, strengthen the visibility of traditional crafts, and reinforce the narrative of Gorenjska as a region deeply connected to its forests and wood heritage. This aligns strongly with visitor demand for authentic, locally produced items and offers an opportunity to develop new, sustainable souvenirs and products, contributing to the circular economy and enhancing regional identity.

In Gorenjska, three key collective destination brands promote local products and services:

"Bohinjsko/From Bohinj": This is the oldest and most established brand, representing authenticity, top-quality local products and services wholeheartedly endorsed by the community. The certificate guarantees the highest standards of workmanship and embodies the essence of Bohinj. Currently, only a limited number of wooden products and wood-related experiences are included, leaving significant potential for growth.

Figure 18: Collective destination brand Bohinjsko / From Bohinj



Source: (BohinjTourist Board, 2025)

"Bled Local Selection": This brand focuses on quality local produce, culinary specialties, and select artisanal items that reflect the cultural and natural richness of Bled. The current portfolio includes a few wood-based products (such as small, handcrafted souvenirs), but overall, wood heritage is still underrepresented.

Figure 19: Bled Local Selection collective destination brand

Bled Local Selection Story



Source: (Bled Tourist Board, 2025)

"Vrhunsko iz Kranjske Gore / Kranjska Gora Finest": This newer brand highlights premium local goods and services that showcase the traditions and natural values of Kranjska Gora and its surroundings. At present, it features very few wood-related items, indicating a strong opportunity to expand this segment in the future.

Figure 20: Collective destination brand Vrhunsko / Finest Kranjska Gora



HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS



WOODEN BOARD



WOODEN BOWL



COLLECTION GORENJSKI NAGELJ



COLLECTION PLANIKA

Source: (Tourist Board Kranjska Gora, 2025)

Currently, only a small number of wood-based products are included in the destinations' brands portfolio. Expanding this segment offers an excellent opportunity to valorise traditional skills, support local entrepreneurship, and enrich the visitor experience with meaningful, authentic products. By introducing new wood-based items – such as innovative souvenirs, artisan crafts, and functional wooden objects – Julian Alps destination can further strengthen its brand identity, highlight sustainable use of local wood, and create tangible connections to its cultural heritage.

Among collective destination brands, Bohinj's brand "Bohinjsko" is the most mature and well-recognized, with an established operational structure, a clear certification process, and an engaged local community. Therefore, this action will first be piloted in Bohinj during the project period (until October 2025), focusing on developing and integrating innovative wood-based souvenirs into the "Bohinjsko" brand.

Based on the outcomes and lessons learned from this pilot phase, the approach will later be adapted and expanded to the other destinations (Bled and Kranjska Gora) and, ultimately, to the broader Gorenjska region.

Through this action, wood-based products can become recognized ambassadors of the region's values, adding value both culturally and economically while supporting local artisans and boosting brand distinctiveness.

4.2.2. Nature of the action

This action is designed as a pilot initiative in Bohinj, serving as a testbed for developing and integrating innovative wood-based products into the "Bohinjsko" collective brand during the project period (until October 2025). The pilot will establish a structured framework and methodological approach that can later be scaled to other destinations in the Julian Alps and the wider Gorenjska region after the project concludes.

The action combines open innovation, co-creation, and targeted capacity-building to support local artisans and promote wood heritage. It aims to stimulate the creation of authentic, high-quality wooden products that embody Bohinj's forest culture and traditional craftsmanship while reinforcing the "Bohinjsko" brand identity.

Key elements include launching a public call for new wood-based product ideas, inviting artisans, designers, and small entrepreneurs from Bohinj to submit innovative proposals for souvenirs and artisan items. Special emphasis will be placed on engaging vulnerable and often overlooked groups, such as students and high school pupils (as future ambassadors of craft traditions), as well as retired craftsmen and older artisans who possess invaluable traditional skills.

Selected participants will take part in a co-creation workshop designed to offer mentorship and hands-on support from experienced professionals in wood design, sustainable product development, and branding. Participants will learn how to adapt traditional knowledge to contemporary market demands, integrate sustainability principles, and align their products with the values of the "Bohinjsko" brand.

During this process, prototypes will be developed or refined, with tailored guidance on design improvements, storytelling, packaging, and market positioning. Special attention will be given to ensuring that final products are suitable for certification under the "Bohinjsko" label and meet expectations for authenticity and quality.

The final stage of the action will include a joint presentation of the developed products at the final event planned under Action 1. This event will provide a high-visibility platform to showcase the new wood-based products to the local community, tourism stakeholders, potential buyers, and media representatives. It will strengthen community pride, promote local entrepreneurship, and highlight the connection between cultural heritage and sustainable tourism.

By establishing Bohinj as a pilot case, the action will generate valuable insights, build local capacity, and create a replicable model for expansion to other destinations such as Bled and Kranjska Gora. After the project, the approach and lessons learned will serve as a foundation for scaling up across the Julian Alps and the wider Gorenjska region, further reinforcing the region's woodcraft identity and contributing to a vibrant, sustainable tourism offer.

4.2.3. Activities performed under the Action

Main activities include:

- Launch of an open call for wood-based product ideas in Bohinj.
- Selection of the most promising concepts.
- Organization of a co-creation workshop with mentorship and expert guidance.
- Prototype development and refinement (including storytelling and branding).
- Preparation of products for certification under "Bohinjsko".
- Presentation of developed products at the final event.

Detailed description of activities

The action will begin with the launch of an open call aimed at local artisans, designers, small entrepreneurs, students, and retired craftspeople from Bohinj. This call will invite them to submit innovative ideas for new wood-based products that could be integrated into the "Bohinjsko" brand. The goal is to encourage creative proposals that respect traditional techniques while exploring new forms and uses, thus bridging heritage and innovation.

Following the call, an expert committee will select approximately 10 of the most promising concepts. The selection criteria will include creativity, potential for local identity reinforcement, sustainability, and feasibility for small-scale production aligned with the "Bohinjsko" certification standards.

The selected participants will then be invited to a co-creation workshop, which will combine practical work sessions with tailored mentorship. The workshop will involve experts in design, product development, branding, and storytelling, helping artisans refine their ideas into market-ready prototypes. Special emphasis will be placed on building strong narrative value (storytelling) that connects each product to the wood heritage of Bohinj.

During the prototype development phase, participants will work on refining the functional and aesthetic aspects of their products, develop sustainable packaging solutions, and ensure alignment with the quality and authenticity standards of the "Bohinjsko" brand. At this stage, mentoring support will also focus on improving presentation skills and preparing compelling brand stories to accompany each product.

Once prototypes are finalized, the products will be prepared for certification within the "Bohinjsko" brand. This process will include technical validation, evaluation of material origin, and compliance with brand criteria. The support team will help participants complete necessary documentation and presentation materials needed for certification and future promotion.

Finally, all newly developed products will be presented at the final event, organized as part of Action 1. This event will provide an opportunity to showcase prototypes to local stakeholders, media representatives, tourism operators, and potential buyers. It will also serve as a platform for artisans to establish new business connections and receive feedback from the wider community.

4.2.4. Potential Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route points involved

This action will primarily focus on Bohinj as a pilot area, leveraging its strong cultural heritage, active local artisan community, and established "Bohinjsko" brand.

Key sites and venues involved include:

- Oplen House Museum (Oplenova hiša): A traditional farmhouse museum showcasing wooden architecture, furniture, and household items; serves as an inspiration for new product designs and stories.
- Andrej's Mill and Venetian Sawmill: Sites representing historical wooden technologies and local wood-processing traditions, ideal for embedding interpretive elements in new product narratives.
- Studor hayracks ("Toplarji"): Iconic wooden hayracks unique to the region; their shape and symbolism can inspire creative souvenir motifs and functional objects.
- Beehouse with painted panels (čebelnjak): Famous painted beehive panels reflecting folk art, a potential source of visual storytelling and design elements for new products.
- Gorjuška fajfa (Gorjuše Pipe): Traditional handcrafted wooden pipe, showcasing intricate design and artisanal skill, serving as an example for high-value craft items.
- Traditional wooden butter moulds: Representing local food heritage and folk motifs, inspiring practical kitchenware or decorative souvenirs.
- Hotel Bohinj and other exemplary wood-based accommodations: Serving as presentation spaces for finished products, reinforcing the message of local wood integration in hospitality.
-

By connecting these heritage sites and wooden craft landmarks, the action will create a strong foundation for developing new products that are deeply rooted in local tradition, while also highlighting these locations as part of the wider Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route narrative.

4.2.5. Stakeholders involved

This action will engage a diverse group of stakeholders to ensure effective design, co-creation, and future integration of wood-based products into the "Bohinjsko" brand.

Key stakeholders include:

- Bohinj Tourism Association (Turizem Bohinj): As the coordinator of the "Bohinjsko" brand, they will oversee certification, support promotion, and facilitate integration into the destination's product portfolio.
- Local artisans and craft associations: The central actors in product design and production, bringing expertise in traditional techniques and contemporary interpretations.
- Municipality of Bohinj: Providing institutional support, promoting the initiative, and linking it with broader local development strategies.
- Julian Alps Association, managed by Tourist Board Bohinj: Supporting future scaling of the action to the wider Julian Alps region.
- Triglav National Park (TNP): Contributing expertise on nature conservation, cultural landscape preservation, and supporting sustainable tourism integration.
- Biotechnical Centre Naklo (BIC Naklo) and other educational institutions: Involving students in the development process as a learning and engagement opportunity, strengthening intergenerational knowledge transfer.
- Retired craftsmen and master woodworkers: As mentors and knowledge keepers, they provide guidance and ensure that traditional methods and stories are preserved and authentically integrated.
- Local NGOs and cultural heritage organizations: Supporting community involvement, outreach, and awareness raising.

- Slovenian Forest Service (ZGS): Providing technical expertise on sustainable wood sourcing and promoting forest-based heritage values.

Through these collaborations, the action aims to create a strong community-driven foundation, ensuring long-term sustainability and high cultural value of the new products.

4.2.6. Timeframe

The implementation of this pilot action in Bohinj will be carried out during the final project phase, concluding by the end of October 2025. The action is structured in logically sequenced phases to ensure efficient preparation, co-creation, and promotion.

■ Preparation and outreach: 2 months

- Launch of the public call for ideas and product proposals.
- Communication and outreach activities targeting local artisans, young creators, students, and retired craftsmen.
- Selection of approximately 10 product ideas for further development.

■ Co-creation workshops and mentoring: 2 months

- Organization of hands-on workshops where selected participants will refine their products with the support of mentors, experienced craftsmen, and designers.
- Initial preparation of product prototypes and conceptual presentation materials.

■ Final presentation and promotion: 1 month

- Integration of developed products into the "Bohinjsko" brand framework, including preliminary assessment for certification.
- Presentation of new wood-based products during the final event, organized in synergy with Action 1, to local stakeholders, media, and wider public.
- Promotion of products as part of the collective destination branding strategy.

Continuation after the end of project: Based on lessons learned and the success of the Bohinj pilot, the approach will be expanded to other Julian Alps destinations (Bled and Kranjska Gora) and eventually to the broader Gorenjska region in subsequent years.

4.2.7. Indicative costs

The estimated costs focus on key activities necessary to successfully deliver the pilot action in Bohinj. Costs related to the final presentation and joint event are included under Action 1 and are therefore not repeated here.

Estimated budget overview:

- Preparation and outreach (call design, basic promotion): 500 EUR
- Co-creation workshops (venue rental, materials, mentor fees, refreshments): 5,000 EUR
- Communication and promotional materials: 500 EUR

Total estimated cost: 6,000 EUR

4.2.8. Output and result indicators

- Number of wood-based product ideas submitted through the call: at least 10
- Number of co-creation workshops held: 1

- Number of participants in co-creation workshop: at least 10 (including local artisans, students, retired craftsmen)
- Number of new or improved wood-based products developed: 3-5
- Number of products prepared for integration into the “Bohinjsko” brand portfolio: at least 3
- Number of local artisans and stakeholders engaged: at least 10
- Visibility and promotion reach (local media articles, social media posts): minimum 5 published features
- Follow-up interest from other Julian Alps destinations (Bled, Kranjska Gora): documented expressions of interest for future scaling.

5. Implementation plan and monitoring system

5.1. Monitoring framework

To ensure the effectiveness of sustainable forest management and cultural heritage protection, it is essential to develop a comprehensive monitoring system. Appropriate indicators and metrics help objectively assess the progress and efficiency of Actionable measures.

5.2. Evaluation plan

To ensure the effectiveness of actions, a well-developed evaluation plan is essential, enabling the regular review and fine-tuning of outcomes:

- Prepare annual reports on the progress of strategic objectives.
- Hold regular consultations with stakeholders to evaluate results and determine necessary adjustments.
- Involve independent experts to ensure the credibility of evaluations.
- Conduct impact assessments to analyse long-term sustainability and economic effects.

5.3. Action indicators

The table below shows the measurable indicators for the implementation of the actions:

Table 2: Indicators for the implementation of the actions

Measure (number)	Indicator		How (method)	Who (PP or other acronym)
	Measurement unit	Value		
Action 1	Number of sites included in the thematic route	8 - 10	Documented list, updated inventory, route map	BSC KRANJ JULIAN ALPS ASSOCIATION
Action 1	Number of workshops for content validation and stakeholder engagement	2	Workshop reports, participant lists, photos	BSC KRANJ JULIAN ALPS ASSOCIATION
Action 1	Number of workshop participants (total)	30	Attendance records, signed lists	BSC KRANJ JULIAN ALPS ASSOCIATION
Actions 1	Number of pilot testing participants	15	Participants list, feedback forms	BSC KRANJ JULIAN ALPS ASSOCIATION
Action 1	Number of local guides trained within Julian Alps certified guide program	10	Training records	JULIAN ALPS ASSOCIATION VSŠ BLEJ

Measure (number)	Indicator		How (method)	Who (PP or other acronym)
	Measurement unit	Value		
Action 1	Number of local stakeholders engaged at the final event	50	Attendance records, signed lists	BSC KRANJ JULIAN ALPS ASSOCIATION
Action 1	Number of promotional campaigns or media features about the route	3	Publication records	BSC KRANJ JULIAN ALPS ASSOCIATION
Action 1	New thematic route officially launched and promoted	1	Launch event report, public communications	BSC KRANJ JULIAN ALPS ASSOCIATION
Action 2	Number of wood-based product ideas submitted through the call	At least 10	Call documentation, proposals list	BOHINJ TOURIST BOARD
Action 2	Number of co-creation workshops held	1	Workshop report, participants list	BOHINJ TOURIST BOARD
Action 2	Number of participants in co-creation workshop	At least 10	Attendance records, signed lists	BOHINJ TOURIST BOARD
Action 2	Number of new or improved wood-based products developed	At least 3	Documentation of prototypes, photos	BOHINJ TOURIST BOARD
Action 2	Number of products prepared for integration into "Bohinjsko" brand portfolio	At least 3	Evaluation records	BOHINJ TOURIST BOARD
Action 2	Number of local artisans and stakeholders engaged	At least 10	Attendance records	BOHINJ TOURIST BOARD
Action 2	Visibility and promotion reach (local media articles, social media posts)	At least 5	Publication records	BOHINJ TOURIST BOARD

6. Potential funding opportunities

To implement the proposed actions and ensure long-term sustainability and expansion beyond the project period, a combination of European and national funding sources can be explored. These funding programmes are highly relevant for supporting cultural heritage valorisation, sustainable tourism, green innovation, and cross-sectoral cooperation in Gorenjska.

1. Interreg programmes (Cross-Border and Transnational Cooperation)

- Interreg Alpine Space and Interreg Danube Region Programme:
Relevance: Both programmes promote transnational cooperation, innovation, and sustainable use of cultural and natural heritage. Actions related to integrating wood heritage into tourism offers, developing thematic routes, and strengthening stakeholder networks align with priorities supporting greener, more inclusive regional development.
- Interreg Italy-Slovenia Cross-Border Cooperation:
Relevance: Supports joint heritage promotion, cross-border tourism products, and community engagement, making it suitable for future expansions of wood-based thematic routes and artisan networks.

2. LIFE Programme

Relevance: While primarily focused on environment and climate action, LIFE increasingly supports initiatives that promote green transition and circular economy in tourism and crafts. Projects fostering eco-friendly wood use, innovative product development, and sustainable tourism infrastructure (such as interpretive trails and wooden visitor facilities) can be eligible.

3. Creative Europe

Relevance: This programme targets cross-sectoral cultural cooperation, innovation in creative industries, and community-based cultural projects. Actions involving storytelling, craft revitalisation, co-creation workshops, and capacity building for local artisans fit well within this framework.

4. LEADER/Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) Funds

Relevance: Managed at the local level through Local Action Groups (LAGs), LEADER supports rural innovation, diversification of rural economies, and valorisation of local resources. It offers flexible funding for smaller-scale pilot actions, workshops, product development, and promotional activities involving local communities and SMEs.

5. National and Regional Tourism Funds

Relevance: The Slovenian Tourist Board and the Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport provide calls for co-financing innovative and sustainable tourism products, cultural route development, and the integration of local crafts into tourism offerings.

6. Other potential sources

Erasmus+: For activities focused on educational training, capacity building of guides, and intergenerational transfer of traditional skills.

EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL FUND FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (EAFRD): For activities supporting forest-based economic diversification and promotion of local wood crafts.

Private sponsorship and public-private partnerships: Involving local businesses and hospitality providers to co-finance elements such as signage, product promotion, and events.

Through strategic use of these diverse funding mechanisms, the region can secure resources to support pilot actions in Bohinj and Gorenjska, expand wood-based thematic tourism, and ensure a long-term legacy of sustainable cultural and economic development linked to wood heritage.

7. Conclusion

The Gorenjska Regional Action Plan (RAP) sets out a clear and ambitious strategy for integrating wood-related cultural heritage into sustainable regional development. The plan is firmly aligned with the objectives and strategic actions of the Danube Wood(s) Cultural Route, while at the same time responding to the unique natural, social, and economic contexts of the Gorenjska region.

Building on extensive regional analysis and stakeholder input, the RAP proposes a set of targeted actions designed to valorise traditional knowledge, strengthen cross-sector cooperation, promote sustainable tourism, and foster green innovation in the use of local wood resources. Through this comprehensive approach, the RAP aims to contribute to biodiversity preservation, cultural heritage safeguarding, and the creation of new economic opportunities rooted in authenticity and sustainability.

A significant achievement of this RAP is the development of measurable actions for all four Key Focus Areas (KFAs) identified in the strategic framework. Each action is designed to be concrete, realistic, and fully in line with the Danube Wood(s) Strategy, while at the same time reflecting regional specificities and local priorities.

Moreover, the plan clearly distinguishes between short-term (immediate) and medium-term actions, ensuring a phased implementation that allows for adaptation and scaling. Notably, two actions have

been selected for implementation within the project period, by October 2025, providing tangible early results and serving as pilots for broader roll-out in the coming years.

Looking forward, the experiences and lessons learned from these pilot actions – including the development of a Wood Heritage Thematic Route within the Juliana Trail and the co-creation of innovative wood-based products for the "Bohinjsko" collective brand – will provide a strong foundation for expanding similar initiatives across other destinations in the Julian Alps and eventually the wider Gorenjska region.

In this way, the RAP not only supports the immediate goals of the Danube Wood(s) project but also lays the groundwork for long-term, place-based cultural and economic development, strengthening Gorenjska's position as a leading region for sustainable, wood-based cultural tourism in the Danube area.

Future directions and recommendations

Based on the groundwork laid by this RAP, it is recommended that regional and local stakeholders continue building on the established cross-sectoral cooperation platform to ensure strong governance and shared ownership of future activities.

It will be essential to monitor and evaluate the pilot actions in detail, using the proposed indicators, and to document lessons learned to guide further expansion across the Julian Alps and the broader Gorenjska region.

Special attention should be given to developing new partnerships with local educational institutions, artisan networks, and nature conservation organizations to strengthen capacity-building and ensure intergenerational transfer of skills.

Furthermore, leveraging EU and national funding opportunities will be critical to secure long-term financial sustainability and enable scaling up of successful models.

Finally, continuous promotion of wood-based cultural heritage as a core identity element of Gorenjska will help consolidate its branding as a flagship sustainable tourism destination in the Danube region, attracting both domestic and international visitors while supporting local livelihoods.

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