

CASE STUDY SI-1

Agri-forestry in sub-alpine Slovenia

BRIEF PROFILE OF THE CASE STUDY

- This case study focuses on **two municipalities** (Solčava and Luče) in northern Slovenia; representing 21,300 ha and 2,000 inhabitants. These are small municipalities, located in narrow **alpine valleys** with large, scattered, secluded farms and large forest estates. Utilised agricultural area is almost exclusively **alpine meadows**. Forests are the main traditional source of farm income and capital for investments; the majority of the wood today is sold as roundwood to wholesalers; there is no other notable industry. It is an attractive tourist destination.

- **Key environmental and social benefit: conservation of habitats (alpine pastures and mountain forests) and genetic resources with innovative or improved traditional practices of land management.**

Maintaining traditional permanent grasslands and preventing overgrowth is mainly based on extensive grazing with autochthonous breeds. Potential for adding value to autochthonous breeds remains largely untapped, mainly due to lack of local slaughterhouses.

- **Main actors:** farmers; **Supporting institutions:** municipalities, Forest Service, various local associations and enterprises, active LAG.

- **Concept:** Private initiatives connecting producers and consumers are key in ensuring the continued provision of the ESBO considered.



Alpine farm

KEY FACTORS IMPACTING THE PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

- Inhabitants are finding it increasingly difficult to **stay competitive** (EU market) and are adapting to the new situation with **extensification, downscaling and increased direct sales**, in particular through **tourist services**.

- Market demand for environmental and social benefits comes mainly from **tourists**.

- The local setting is not particularly responsive to changes in policy and even less to the market environment.

- Governance and policy support: National legislation tends to be insensitive to local particularities.

Discrepancies between demands coming from the EU level and the local reality are even bigger. This might be solved by devolving some of the decision-making powers to lower levels of administration.

- Enabling actors: private companies; new associations; the strongest agri-food actor in the LAG, cooperative Šaleška dolina z.o.o., is successfully developing a brand of organic beef produce and searching for new local suppliers. A similar approach (full traceability of produce, innovative approaches to marketing and distribution) could also be successfully applied to the Jezersko-Solčava lamb.



Autochthonous breeds: Jezersko-Solčava sheep and Cika cow

EMERGING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- **Collective action is decisive:** concerted marketing approach is needed to improve visibility of the area

- There is a strong effort of the **local governance** to create favourable conditions to develop the municipalities' competitive advantages (e.g. through the municipality Centre Rinka).

- **Policy measures** should encourage producers to find **effective forms of cooperation**, or other ways of increasing visibility and competitiveness.

- Recommendations for decision-makers: how to **better exploit RDP measures for cooperation/collective actions**; at the national level, the **adequacy of some requirements of the agro-ecological compensation payments should be reassessed**.

