

Highlights of the Šentviška Gora Plateau Smart Village Strategy

Slovenia



About Šentviška Gora Plateau

The Šentviška Gora Plateau comprises a group of small villages in the hilly part of western part of Slovenia. A picturesque Alpine landscape offers unforgettable sights of the mountains. The plateau is located at 624,5 m above the sea level and is 20 km away from the Italian border, 40 km from the Austrian border, and 60 km from the Adriatic sea.

The residents, approximately 657, are mainly engaged in agriculture, especially livestock and crop farming. The plateau is rich in cultural and natural sites. Over 40 km of beautifully landscaped trails are available to hikers, runners, and cyclists, with all major intersections properly marked. The people who live, work, and create the everyday life of the plateau are at its heart. The products and services offered by the local providers reflect high quality, tradition, and harmony with the natural environment.

Key challenges & assets

Key challenges, defined in the process of the strategy design in 2020, are:

- ✓ Negative demographic trends such as depopulation;
- ✓ Need for infrastructure and programmes for permanent education and vocational training;
- ✓ Strengthen the social life, cross-generational exchange, culture and sports;
- ✓ Enhance access to basic services;
- ✓ Activate the unexploited assets in the agriculture sector;

The main assets recognised by the inhabitants of the Šentviška Gora Plateau are linked to nature and the environment. Plenty of forests at the plateau and around it are not used sufficiently and offer opportunities for wood processing. Another underused asset is the dominant cattle farming, whose milk is almost not processed at all.

Extraordinary landscapes and a healthy environment make for a great health tourism offer, including for activities such as cycling, hiking, cultural events etc.

Vacant infrastructure offers a good basis to provide for the needs of elderly people and smaller, socially oriented business.

The main asset of the plateau in general are the people. An enthusiastic group of young people took the initiative to improve the quality of life in the area.

Main objectives of smart village strategy

Objective 1: to raise the quality of life for all generations (the younger generation should get the possibilities to create appropriate standard for family and professional life, whereas the older generation should get a standard for a decent and good-quality ageing);

Objective 2: to foster particular segments of the life at the Šentviška Gora Plateau, where the most need and interests are defined (elderly care, culture and sports, access to the services and local economy).

What is smart?

Community Participation in Strategy Development

The plateau is part of the Municipality of Tolmin and consists of three major villages with hamlets, which form three administrative units referred to as 'local communities'. Each local community has a council, whose president and members are elected by the villagers. In 2012, all three local communities, together with all associations from the plateau, created and confirmed the Šentviška Gora Plateau Development Programme 2012–2020 which has served as the basis for development.

The ideas and suggestions were gathered at the community general meetings and converted into concrete proposals that are considered to be appropriate and necessary for the development of the plateau. Similarly, the strategy of the Šentviška Gora Plateau in 2020 was created, whereby the assistance from the project Smart Rural 21 was decisive.

Links to other strategies

- ✓ **Development Programme of the Municipality Tolmin:** infrastructure, services, spatial planning;
- ✓ **Local Development Strategy of the LAG Dolina Soče:** creation of the working places, environment, social solidarity;
- ✓ **Development Strategy of Slovenia 2030:** life quality for all generations, responsible society, preserved healthy natural environment, competence and management efficiency.

What smart actions are implemented and planned?

- ✓ Renovation of the cross-generational centre Pečine, for daily care of the elderly, which will be upgraded to the 'Silver village' in the future;
- ✓ The plans for a residential neighbourhood are adopted and in the next few years, the basic infrastructure for a new settlement will be built. The residential neighbourhood will be devoted predominantly to young families, seeking to move to the plateau.
- ✓ The traditional rock festival "Gora roka" already has a good reputation and receives several thousand visitors every year. Most of the villagers are voluntarily engaged in its organisation and all profit goes for the public needs of three villages of the plateau. Upgrading of the local event with broad echo will be done with the building of a Camp at the Prapetno Brdo site.
- ✓ Broadband to the plateau is one of the priorities in the field of infrastructure.
- ✓ Creation of the trademark of the Šentviška Gora Plateau will be upgraded by the founding a village trust.

A smart action that we are planning...

The key action that the inhabitants of the plateau are planning in the near future is the creation of the interactive website/portal of the Šentviška Gora Plateau. The website will be the focal point to give all needed information firstly to the inhabitants while searching for the daily needs (such as mobility, local food, events, news etc.) and, secondly, to visitors about the various possibilities the plateau offers.

The following action will be creation of the trademark Šentviška Gora Plateau, upgraded by the Foundation, where each inhabitant of the Plateau would have his/her share and participation.

