

CASE STUDY SI-2

Managing recreation in urban forests

BRIEF PROFILE OF THE CASE STUDY

- Two different cities are considered for this case study:
 - **Ljubljana (Rožnik and Golovec)**, the state capital. **Forest ownership is scattered**, and **municipality is a rather passive manager** other than some investment in infrastructure. Locals are little aware that forests are **private** (owner-visitor conflicts).
 - **Celje (Celje Town Forest)**, a large growing forest estate bought by the municipality over the past decades, also an active player in its management in **good cooperation** with the Forest service. They **compensate** owners and have good public image.
- **Key environmental and social benefit: public health and leisure.** In both cases forests are designated as forests with special function, no commercial exploitation;
- **Actors:** municipalities, Forest Service and owners. Also increasing numbers of visitors with different demands (infrastructure). Farmers only relevant as forest owners. The key difference between the two areas is **personal engagement of Forest service workers** and **municipality policy/leadership** and a **consistent long-term strategy**
- **Governance:** all Slovenian forests are of **public access** for recreation! Long-standing Slovenian tradition of public forest management; increasing demand for outdoor activities in both cities; importance of **project funding** in Celje (Interreg –Green4Grey, LEADER – RuBike) but **no** stable financing; **inclusive** decision-making; active work on public image (**trademark**); Ljubljana – Green capital – mainly focused on parks, traffic, waste, less on urban forests; owners **not compensated** despite existing regulatory provisions.



Celje Town forest Treehouse

KEY FACTORS IMPACTING THE PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

- **Appreciation and demand increasing in both locations.** Awareness of forest ecosystem benefits can be improved through **education** (Celje) and **targeted promotional activities**. Provision could be increased in terms of quality by **improving infrastructure and making forests safer for visitors and cleaner** (removing litter and waste from open dumps).
- **Resolving interest conflicts depends on the concrete setting.** The municipalities decide on granting forests different forms of **special status**, determining the **specific management regimes** and the way that owners are to be compensated for potential restrictions.
- **No strong direct role of EU policy**, other than providing options of project funding through different (structural, regional development) funds.
- **Management system (and available funds thereof) make environmental and social benefits accessibility/enjoyment possible.** Increasing public interest (demand?) for environmental and social benefits plays a catalytic role in the process of its appreciation/availability to the general public. But personal engagement of key actors is the main factor that makes a difference.

EMERGING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The following elements are decisive:

- **Personal engagement of key actors and consistent strategies**
- **Cooperation of decision-makers and other actors**
- **Creative approaches in public forest management** (marketing – public image, communication, project funding)
- **Demand for public health and leisure** is increasing in urban areas, so managing conflicts between private and public interest will increase in importance



Celje Town forest logo



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