

Process of recognizing the local potentials as a basis for sustainable development

Darij KRAJČIČ¹

Abstract

The article discusses the process of recognizing the local developmental and human potentials in the pilot area of Pohorje, Slovenia. Special emphasis herein is given to the need of stakeholder participation strategic plan. In the pilot area, the theoretical model was tested. As we are dealing with a wooded area, the role of forestry is highly significant in this respect, and it has been even established that it could become a mainstay of the pilot area's development. The identification of stakeholders was followed by a series of workshops with SWOT analyses and stipulation of sustainability indicators. The quality of the stakeholders' integration into the process was also measured. 79% of them believe that their proposals are totally or predominantly taken into consideration, 78% are satisfied or very satisfied with the results, whereas the expectations were mostly or fully met by 80% of them. A solid integration of the stakeholders into the planning process enhances the plan's implementation, for they identify themselves with the plan and are co-holders as well as promoters of its implementation. We are providing for a high degree of sustainable development both by educating and informing the stakeholders and with a suitable direction of the plan's formation.

Key words: sustainable development, participation, management plan, indicators, SWOT analysis, Pohorje

Proces prepoznavanja lokalnih potencialov kot pogoj za trajnostni razvoj

Izvleček

Članek obravnava proces prepoznavanja lokalnih potencialov za pilotno območje Pohorje. Pri tem posebej poudarja potrebo po strateškem načrtu vključevanja deležnikov. Teoretični model smo na pilotnem območju preskusili. Ker gre za gozdno območje, je vloga gozdarstva pri tem zelo pomembna, ugotovili smo celo, da bi lahko postalo nosilec razvoja pilotnega območja. Identifikaciji deležnikov je sledila serija delavnic s SWOT-analizami in določitvijo indikatorjev trajnosti. Merili smo tudi kakovost vključevanja deležnikov v proces. Tako jih 79 % meni, da so njihovi predlogi povsem ali večinoma upoštevani, z rezultati je zadovoljnih ali zelo zadovoljnih 78 %, pričakovanja so bila večinoma oziroma povsem zadovoljena pri 80 % udeležencev. Kakovostna vključenost deležnikov v načrtovalski proces poveča izvedljivost načrta, deležniki se z načrtom poistovetijo in so sonosilci ter promotorji njegovega uresničevanja. Visoko stopnjo trajnostnega razvoja zagotavljamo tako z izobraževanjem in informiranjem deležnikov kot tudi z usmerjanjem nastajanja načrta.

Key words: trajnostni razvoj, sodelovanje, načrt upravljanja, kazalniki, SWOT analiza, Pohorje

1 Introduction

1 Uvod

Today, the phrase »sustainable development« has several definitions and is often used. For the needs of this article we shall adopt the belief that sustainable development satisfies the needs of the present human race, without endangering the possibilities of the future generations to satisfy their needs (UN 1987). As sustainable development closely links the care for the bearing capacity of natural ecosystems with social challenges, it is based on

the following three columns: (i) economic and (ii) social development, and (iii) environmental protection, including biodiversity conservation.

In the development of the local environment we are, in effect, faced with the following dilemma: (1) whether to transfer developmental concepts of separate sectors from other environments directly and unrelatedly into this environment, or (2) to recognize our own developmental potentials on the basis of specific capacities of the local environment and to prepare an integral development plan. As far as (1) is concerned, it can be said that it is intellectually easier, it usually enters the local environment

¹ Asst. Prof. dr. D.K.: Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Tobačna 5, SI-1000 Ljubljana. darij.krajcic@zrsvn.si

as something foreign, the local stakeholders' participation in the creation of such development is low, while its implementation is seemingly simple and renders relatively fast results. For (2) the following can be claimed: it requires significant intellectual efforts, it still has to be discovered, the local stakeholders are significantly included in the process itself, its implementation is more demanding, and the results come somewhat later and slower. Owing to the lack of our own developmental documents and promises that fast developmental results will be brought into local environments by the holders (1), local communities often opt for the development model (1). This is greatly contributed by the fact that local communities are often fragmented and reticent. In general, such approach distinctly favours the (i) of sustainable development, highly ignores particularly the (iii), while the (ii) is questionable. This is why we simply cannot speak of sustainable development in these particular cases.

Most crucial in the sustainable development modelling is a solid and timely inclusion of stakeholders into the process. Solid means that stakeholders can equally and fully participate in the decision-making as far as development model is concerned, while timely indicates that they are included in the process from the very beginning and not at the end when all decisions have practically already been made. Buchy & Hoverman (2000) presented an overview of very diverse comprehensions of participation in forest planning and substantiated the meaning of participation. In Slovenian forestry, we too have been well aware of the significance of participation (BONČINA 2004), but the question still remains, whether this awareness has been sufficient. Furthermore, participation is substantially more than stemming from the Aarhus Convention (MAREGA/KOS 2002). The complex and dynamic nature of environmental problems requires flexible and transparent decision-making that embraces a diversity of knowledges and values. For this reason, stakeholder participation in environmental decision-making has been increasingly sought and embedded into national and international policy (REED 2008).

Some results show that the forestry profession finds it difficult to accept new concepts (such as nature conservation) that are knocking on its door (BURGAR 2011). In the moment the planning is spread from wooded to unwooded areas, a wider and deeper understanding of participation becomes implicit. Here, the protected areas (e.g. Natura 2000 areas, greater and more significant natural assets) are no exception at all. The results of planning process depend upon the different levels of participation and intensity of it. This is why the participation process must be planned strategically through identification of stakeholders before the decision is made how they are to be integrated and how we should communicate with them (GETZNER/ JUNGMEIER/ LANGE 2010). It still holds good, however, that everything depends on the people, for even the best planned process gives no good results if implemented poorly.

2 Definition of the problem

2 Opredeleitev problema

The key question we attempted to solve is whether it's possible to change the developmental course of partial, unrelated ideas, and what approaches would be needed to do so. We were further interested if we had suitably developed institutional infrastructure for such an approach, or whether this role can be taken over by any of the already existing institutions. Here we tested, of course, especially the forestry sector's capacities, considering that forest sustenance and close-to-nature management have been its inception point for a long time and would be easiest for it to assume this approach. Of crucial importance in the ascertainment of forest sustenance are sustainable development indicators (LEŠNIK/ GULIČ/ DANEV 2010), which have to be stipulated, classified and monitored. And finally, are we able to construct with this approach, through partnership and participation, a common development document of the area named Management Plan Draft. The activities were carried out as part of the NATREG project from the South East Europe programme, in which the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation played the role of the leading partner.

3 Working methods

3 Metode dela

The new approach to the creation of a common development policy was tested in the Pohorje pilot area, the key reasons for its selection being: the high diversity of its use (agriculture, forestry, tourism ...), the diversity of stakeholders (local communities, divisioning of the area into several councils, no common development document, great significance of the forestry sector, high integration of the area into the Natura 2000 network), numerous sectoral developmental ambitions, as well as conflicts between nature conservation and development plans and intentions.

During the research, the questionnaire methods were mainly used and implemented among different stakeholders, who attempted to find, during a series of workshops, a common language for the area's development. At the workshops, the stakeholders also made, in a participative manner, the SWOT analysis of the area from the aspects of forestry, hunting, agriculture and tourism. By doing so, the stakeholders initially identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and finally ranked them. Thus their relative significance was obtained. The ranking was carried out by each participant given 3 points for each component of the SWOT analysis (a total of 12 points). Each participant then arbitrary gave 3 points to each element within components. Thus he was able to allot these

3 points to a single element or 2 or 1 to several elements each.

For the purpose of sustainable development monitoring at Pohorje, sustainability indicators of the ecological, economic, social and cultural objectives in separate sectors were developed. Each participant evaluated the indicator with mark 2 (very important) to -2 (very unimportant). From thus evaluated indicators, average values could have been finally assessed.

With the aid of the questionnaire method, the degree of integration of stakeholders into the planning process and their contentedness with the process itself and results was also estimated.

A total of 79 events (workshops, meetings, presentations) were implemented in the pilot area, where at least 500 people took part. In the article, only those are analysed that were on the milestones of the process of the Area Management Plan Draft's formation.

4 Study area

4 Predstavitev objekta

The Pohorje pilot area (Picture 1), which covers 25,733 ha, embraces 4.8% of all Slovenian forests. Its forest density is 70.4% with the prevalent share of coniferous trees. As Pohorje is the only silicate mountain range in Slovenia, it is exceptional particularly from the geomorphological, hydrological, biological and cultural-landscape aspects. Its special features are the Pohorje raised bogs and, from the landscape and ecological perception, the grassy ridges. Pohorje also comprises a vast Natura 2000

area with numerous species and habitat types, stipulated in accordance with the Habitat and Bird Directives. The central part of Pohorje is practically uninhabited. Mixed farms prevail (50%), followed by pure farms (28%), while the rest are aged and supplemental. Most field and garden surfaces fall into the 5 ha size class, meadows exceed 5 ha, while the majority of forests belong to the size class of 20 to 30 ha. The majority of farm owners are from 41 to 60 years old, most of them with primary school education (53.4%). As far as supplemental activities on the farms are concerned, tourism and wood processing prevail. There is little ecological food production, with European drawing of funds limited only to the OMD measure (payments for limited farming factors). Pohorje comprises two larger (Mariborsko Pohorje, Zreško Pohorje – Rogla) and three smaller (Ribniško Pohorje, Trije kralji, Kope) tourist centres. Apart from winter sports facilities, several sports grounds, halls, practice grounds and adrenalin parks are also available, enabling sports activities to be carried out throughout the year. Notable activities include trekking, cycling and rich catering trade capacities.

5 Results

5 Rezultati

5.1 Integration of the public scheme

5.1 Shema vključenja javnosti

Integration of the public began by identifying the existing development projects and protagonists. This was carried out within the framework of three workshops on different locations with different stakeholders. Then the



Picture 1: Pohorje pilot area

Slika 1: Pilotno območje Pohorje

key stakeholders and interested public were identified. There followed four sectoral workshops and a collective SWOT workshop. Thereupon, strategic and operative management objectives were earmarked at three regional workshops. The purpose of the final project workshop was to adjust the projects aimed at attaining the planned objectives. The process was concluded with a public presentation and public debate on the Area Management Plan Draft for the Pohorje pilot area.

5.2 Identification of stakeholders

5.2 Identifikacija deležnikov

The stakeholders and currently running development projects were identified at three workshops held on different locations in the project area. Altogether, 131 stakeholders took part. One of the key conclusions was that the stakeholders knew neither each other nor the projects taking place in the very same area. On the basis of the workshops' results, a plan as to the integration of

stakeholders into the process was made as well as key stakeholders and the interested public identified. At the same time, the actual activities concerning informing, consultation and codecision-making were stipulated.

5.3 Inclusion of sectors

5.3 Vključevanje sektorjev

As the workshops were organised within the framework of separate sectors, the results are shown in the same way. Prior to the workshops' implementation, all stakeholders were acquainted with the procedures regarding the making of the Management Plan Draft.

5.3.1 Forestry and hunting

5.3.1 Gozdarstvo in lov

The conclusions arrived at the workshop at which 21 people took part are shown in Table 1. Maximum value of the element could reach 63 points.

Table 1: SWOT analysis of forestry and hunting (most important issues only)

Preglednica 1: SWOT-analiza gozdarstva in lova (le najpomembnejše)

Strengths	No. of points
Forest resources potential	31
Solid organisational arrangement of forestry and hunting with a long tradition	22
Compactness of the area	14
Weaknesses	
Too dense forest infrastructure	25
Altered and poor tree and shrubbery structure	22
Increasingly overgrown grasslands	20
Opportunities	
Development of tourism	20
Fashionable green	20
Intersectoral cooperation	17
Pohorje wood identification	14
Threats	
Mass tourism	41
Prevalence of interest groups	15
Megaprojects	13
Lack of connection between the sectors	13

Our analysis has shown that while numerous opportunities remain unexploited in the area, good potentials exist within it, both in the natural environment and in the organisational infrastructure. For us it is important that the foresters see themselves as a solid organisational potential. In spite of the high and solid growing stock in the Pohorje forest, the stakeholders are well aware that numerous new opportunities exist for better marketing particularly through the identity of Pohorje timber. The stakeholders believe that the danger of mass tourism is great, which is no doubt a clear warning to the development policy principals that the course of development should be changed.

Thereupon, the same group of stakeholders also estimated the indicators of sustainability of forestry development (Table 2).

While the ecological objectives are met by the highest values of sustainability indicators, the economic, social and cultural objectives are much lower, which indicates a lower economic dependence on forests, or that in respect of sustainability the economic objectives are less significant as far as stakeholders are concerned. It can be ascertained, however, that we are still not sufficiently aware of the forests' social and cultural significance.

Table 2: The most significant indicators of sustainability in forestry

Preglednica 2: Najpomembnejši indikatorji trajnosti v gozdarstvu

Ecological objectives	Average value
Influence of forests on the environment	1.89
Wood production function	1.79
Hydrological function	1.74
Biotopical function	1.63
Protectional function	1.32
Awareness as to the current significance of the forest as a natural asset	1.16
Economic objectives	
Private financial benefits from forests (privately owned forests)	1.31
Public financial benefits from forests (state forests)	0.84
Social and cultural objectives	
Significance of forests for private users	1.31
Significance of forests for all users (visitors)	1.10
Significance of forests for local users	1.05

5.3.2 Agriculture

5.3.2 Kmetijstvo

Ten participants attended the workshop, with results shown in Table 3. Maximum value of the element could reach 30 points.

Similar as in forestry, it can be ascertained that in the sphere of agriculture we still have many opportunities for development and a better economic position of the farms. Potentials lie particularly in organised marketing of the products and in creation of a greater added value on the farms. It is interesting that the highest marks were reached by wood as a source of income, and not the standard agricultural activities. Unutilized possibilities can be found particularly in synergy with tourism, meaning that pure agriculture is not sufficiently attractive to farms, which was eventually confirmed during the evaluation of economic objectives. The crucial difficulty in the search for these synergies is the unfavourable demographic picture of farms and the farmers' low education.

Amongst the sustainability indicators, the following are exposed to the greater extent (Table 4).

Table 3: SWOT analysis of agriculture (most important issues only)

Preglednica 3: SWOT-analiza kmetijstva (le najpomembnejše)

Strengths	No. of points
Wood as a source of income	8
Genetic diversity of plants	6
Culinary development	4
Weaknesses	
Poor marketing of the products	7
Low education	5
Much manual work	3
Opportunities	
Synergy with tourism	7
Renewable sources of energy	6
Modern bio/eco/natural	5
Introduction of brands	5
Threats	
Poor image of agriculture	7
No added value	6
Further abandoning of agricultural production	5
Abandoning of farms	3

The highest sustainability indicators are reached by ecological objectives, immediately followed by social and cultural objectives. In any case, it holds good that the awareness of social and cultural role of agriculture and agricultural landscape is much greater than in forestry. Economic goals reach low values owing to the belief that agriculture brings no profit to farms and that it is not attractive to the employed. Much more important for the economic effectiveness are believed to be supplementary farm activities, such as tourism, catering and energy production from renewable resources.

5.3.3 Tourism

5.3.3 *Turizem*

Within the framework of tourism, two workshops were organised due to the area's different characteristics. The workshops were attended by 30 participants, with

results shown in Table 5. Maximum value of the element could reach 90 points.

The results show that there are still numerous developmental possibilities in tourism and that the main obstacles lie primarily on the organisational side of tourism supply. This means that added value could be well increased in the existing Pohorje tourist infrastructure.

The most significant sustainability indicators recognised by the participants are shown in Table 6.

We can conclude that the ecological sustainability indicators surpass other indicators, which indicates that the participants are well aware of the significance of environmental abstinence in tourism and that the economic objectives are in fact subjected to the ecological objectives. This is an important ascertainment, which should be taken into consideration in future as well, particularly during the

Table 4: The most significant sustainability indicators in agriculture

Preglednica 4: Najpomembnejši indikatorji trajnosti v kmetijstvu

Ecological objectives	Average value
Agricultural impact on genetic diversity	1.67
Agricultural landscape as a public good	1.67
Benefits of traditional agricultural landscape conservation	1.67
Agricultural impact on ecosystem diversity	1.58
Significance of sustainable use of arable land	1.58
Economic objectives	
Significance of permanent growth of agricultural competitive capacity	0.92
Economic significance as to the preservation of the traditional manner of food production and processing	0.92
Significance of acquiring finances from structural funds	0.92
Social and cultural objectives	
Significance of well regulated agricultural land for tourism	1.67
Significance of agricultural land's ecosystemic services for the quality of life in the area	1.58
General benefits of the agricultural land's social sustainability	1.58

potential new encroachments upon space for the purpose of tourist infrastructure.

5.3.4 Integration of results

5.3.4 Združevanje rezultatov

Thereupon, we integrated the results of all workshops, which then served as groundwork for the concluding workshop with the stakeholders (38 participants) from all sectors. This was also an important contribution to the linking of stakeholders in the area. The most significant SWOT analysis results are shown in Table 7. Maximum value of the element could reach 114 points.

The participants gave the highest marks especially to the various developmental opportunities and threats, the latter stemming exclusively from the human factor – the society's low organizational culture both at the local and national levels.

On the basis of the joint SWOT analysis, the participants also selected the elements for the vision of Pohorje in 2030. It is marked by the following phrases:

nature conservation, local sources, ecologically oriented tourism, modern family farms with sustainable management, let us learn about nature in nature itself, shelters to animals, Pohorje – nature park, Pohorje – recognizable brand, cooperation and connectedness, etc.

5.4 Stipulation of strategic and operative objectives, and presentation of results

5.4 Oblikovanje strateških in operativnih ciljev in predstavitev rezultatov

A special attention was given to the stipulation of strategic and operative objectives, where stakeholders were also involved. During three separate workshops, at which 135 stakeholders took part, six strategic objectives (preserved nature and landscape, viable green tourism and directed visits, to the environment and users friendly use of natural sources, to the environment and users friendly mobility and regulated infrastructure, preserved cultural heritage and tradition, high quality of the locals' lives) were identified on the basis of the SWOT analysis and the

Table 5: SWOT analysis of tourism (most important issues only)

Preglednica 5: SWOT-analiza turizma (le najpomembnejše)

Strengths	No. of points
Natural features	10
Nature preservation	10
The existing cycling and trekking trails	9
Season throughout the year	8
Weaknesses	
Insufficient links between protagonists offering their services	20
No integral products, dispersed offer without closer links and synergy	15
No implementation of the written down strategic documents	14
No organization for the management of the integral Pohorje area and no integral marketing	9
Opportunities	
Green is modern, trend of active holiday spending and relaxation in nature	20
Development of eco and bio tourism and food, possibility of eco-labels, use of natural materials during construction of tourist facilities, integration of traditional activities into tourist capacities	15
Possibility of applying for funds at public calls for proposals	13
Inter-regional linking of Pohorje and Pohorje with the valley below	12
Threats	
Purchasing power decline	17
Rigidity of the state structures – too long and complicated bureaucratic procedures	16
Intersectoral discordance at the national and local levels	9
Political fragmentation and diverse interests at the local and regional levels	8

vision for Pohorje with a series of operative objectives within them.

The path leading to the implementation of objectives was paved with a series of project ideas, which were also laid down at the workshop together with the stakeholders from the Pohorje pilot area, all with clear principals, sources and approximate deadlines.

The results were finally presented to all participants of the process at the concluding event. On the basis of final observations and remarks the document's final wording

was prepared as well (<http://www.natreg.eu/pohorje/nactr-upravljanja>).

5.5 Assessment of the quality of stakeholders integration into the process

5.5 Ocena kakovosti vključevanja deležnikov v proces

One of the key steps in the process of recognizing the local potentials is also the assessment of successfulness

Table 6. The most significant sustainability indicators in tourism

Preglednica 6. Najpomembnejši indikatorji trajnosti v turizmu

Ecological objectives	Average value
Impact of the general infrastructure's arrangement on tourism	1.68
Benefits of conserving natural areas for tourism (raised bogs, grasslands, forests ...)	1.65
Impact of tourist development on the Pohorje area	1.65
Ecological significance of the recreational function for tourism	1.55
Economic objectives	
Building of infrastructure for recreational activities	1.50
Jobs for the locals in tourism	1.29
Economic impact of tourism on education (training of the employees, cooperation with schools ...)	1.25
Social and cultural objectives	
Impact of tourism on the quality of the environment and natural heritage	1.55
Impact of tourism on the quality of the local inhabitants' lives	1.33
Significance of the quality of local tourist services and capacities in the area	1.23

regarding the integration of stakeholders in the process itself. After the concluding activities aimed at preparing the Management Plan Draft for the Pohorje pilot area, the quality of the stakeholders' integration into the process was thus thoroughly assessed. On the basis of 49 answers we were able to ascertain that the stakeholders were well (53%) and very well (28%) acquainted with the project results, that 41% were satisfied and 37% very satisfied with them. 42% of them claimed that the project mostly fulfilled their expectations, while 38% estimated that it fulfilled their expectations in all respects.

When speaking about the quality of the stakeholders' integration into the process, the respondents claimed that their proposals were taken into consideration fully (25%) or mostly (54%). They mostly (50%) and fully (23%) agreed that the process itself contributed to the improved cooperation amongst organisations. Some more restraint was felt in respect of the effect of the process on the Pohorje management, given that slightly fewer stakeholders agreed with it mostly (42%) or fully (10%). This is most probably the consequence of the fact that the project is not followed

by a clear principal by whom the project results would be eventually put into force. The stakeholders mostly (57%) or fully (9%) agreed that the utilization of potentials of natural and cultural features would be improved after the concluded process. The stakeholders are highly interested in further cooperation in the implementation of development projects at Pohorje, for the great majority of them agree with it fully (60%) or mostly (34%).

Parallel to it, visits to the web site prepared specially for this process were counted. In the end it was established that the site had been visited from 11,563 different IPs, which indicates a high interest in the matter by the public.

6 Discussion

6 Razprava

Given that sustainable development contains economic, social and environmental components,

Table 7: Joint SWOT analysis (most important issues only)

Preglednica 7. Skupna SWOT-analiza (le najpomembnejše)

Strengths	No. of points
Rich cultural and technical heritage	16
Natural features and assets	16
Preservation of nature	14
Weaknesses	
Insufficient linking and cooperation among tourism suppliers, no integral development strategy	18
No corporate identity of Pohorje, no corporate products	14
Poor linking of the sectors	11
Opportunities	
Trend of bio, eco, natural, green tourism, active spare time spending, development of new products	22
Introduction of new brands	10
Inclusion of the local population and its integration (regional and within the area)	9
Threats	
Intersectoral discordance and unconnectivity (institutions, projects ...)	21
Mass tourism and mega projects	21
Abandoning of agriculture	18

stakeholders from all three sectors were included in the process in order to prepare as good Management Plan Draft for the Pohorje pilot area as possible. For a quality planning process, a quality inclusion of stakeholders into the process is highly significant, apart from a good identification of the condition of the area, objectives and ways to them. They also significantly contribute to the recognition of the local potentials, or they are the local potentials themselves. This recognition is very important not only for the preparation of the planning process, but it also significantly contributes to the quality of the plan. Its quality is increased in all its key parts (condition, objectives, measures) and, which is perhaps even most important, in the feasibility of the plan itself. Specifically, the stakeholders thus identify themselves with the plan itself, become its component part, and not merely secondary observers of the events taking place. Thus a possibility that the document will remain forgotten on one of the shelves, covered by dust, will be reduced. The research has shown that the planning of the origin of

the management draft for the Pohorje pilot area has been well implemented and that the stakeholders very highly estimated the quality of their influence on the document, which means that the identification degree is very high. An assessment of the quality of the stakeholders' inclusion into the process of planning such and similar issues should become a component part of the planning process.

In the end the question is raised, as to who will be the principal of the plan's implementation or who will keep watch over the plan's implementation. At the moment, there is no such principal for the entire Pohorje area. Implementation on the basis of selfregulation or on the principle of the same distance from each other, as for example observed by a flock of birds, is not feasible or is ineffective as far as the human society is concerned, which is the reason why a principal is required. One of the possible principals could be the public institution of the regional park, if at all founded, of course. The active principal could also become the Pohorje Fund that has been

established in the meanwhile. Or could this be, with certain changes and adjustments, the Slovenia Forest Service that uniformly covers the Pohorje terrain? This is no doubt a challenge that should be well considered especially for the fact that several similar areas exist in Slovenia and that the sustainability principle has had its domicile in forestry for a long time.

7 Povzetek

7 Summary

Pri oblikovanju razvojnih programov območij je prepoznavanje lokalnih razvojnih in človeških potencialov ključnega pomena. Če želimo v razvoj vključiti še elemente trajnosti, je zelo pomembno, da takšen razvojni proces usmerjajo institucije, ki o tem največ vedo. Nekritični prenos razvojnih konceptov iz drugih okolij je napačen, ker ne temelji na razvojnih potencialih tega območja, ampak na potencialih, od koder prihaja. Prepoznavanje lokalnih in človeških potencialov smo razvili z načrtnim in dobro vodenim procesom participacije. Kakovostno vključevanje deležnikov pomeni, da deležniki popolnoma sodelujejo in soodločajo pri oblikovanju razvoja. Njihovo vključevanje mora biti pravočasno, torej že na samem začetku procesa. Dobremu načrtu participacije je sledila izvedba, kjer smo v nizu delavnic z velikim številom deležnikov oblikovali osnutek načrta upravljanja pilotnega območja Pohorja (25.733 ha). Organizirali smo skupno 79 dogodkov (delavnic, srečanj, predstavitev), kjer je po konservativni oceni sodelovalo 500 ljudi. Poleg organizacije delavnic z jasnimi cilji, so bile SWOT-metoda in metode anketiranja glavni vir podatkov za analize in sintezo. Vključevanje deležnikov smo začeli z identifikacijo obstoječih razvojnih projektov in akterjev. Potem smo identificirali ključne deležnike in zainteresirano javnost. Sledila je serija SWOT- delavnic, kjer smo prišli do ključnih in rangiranih prednosti, slabosti, priložnosti in nevarnosti območja. Strateške in operative cilje smo oblikovali na seriji treh regionalnih delavnic. Končni rezultat procesa je bil osnutek načrta upravljanja pilotnega območja Pohorja z naborom razvojnih projektov. Elemente za oblikovanje vizije Pohorja 2030 označujejo besedne zveze, kot so: ohranjanje krajine, lokalni viri, ekološko naravnani turizem, sodobne družinske kmetije s sonaravnim gospodarjenjem, učimo se o naravi v naravi, zatočišče živalim, Pohorje – naravni park, Pohorje – prepoznana blagovna znamka, sodelovanje in povezanost ipd.

Preverili smo tudi kakovost vključevanja deležnikov v proces in ugotovili, da jih je 81 % vsaj dobro seznanjenih z rezultati projekta, 78 % jih je z njimi vsaj zadovoljnih, 80 % pa jih ugotavlja, da je projekt vsaj izpolnil njihova pričakovanja. Ugotovili smo tudi visoko stopnjo upoštevanja predlogov deležnikov (79 %) in da je proces sam po sebi izboljšal sodelovanje med organizacijami,

ki delajo v tem prostoru. Zelo visoko oceno procesu pripisujemo tudi dejstvu, da je interes za nadaljnje sodelovanje pri uresničevanju razvojnih projektov izrazilo kar 94 % vprašanih. Velik interes za sam proces kaže tudi število obiskov spletne strani, saj smo zabeležili dostop s kar 11.563 računalniških naslovov (IP-jev).

Na koncu kaže omeniti, da bi sedaj potrebovali močnega akterja, ki bi razvoj, začrtan v osnutku upravljanja, vodil. Možna bi bila ustanovitev npr. regijskega parka Pohorje, ali pa bi to vlogo z ustrežno dodelavo prevzela kakšna od obstoječih institucij (npr. Zavod za gozdove, Sklad za Pohorje ipd.)

8 References

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