

# Potentials for Developing Sustainable Tourism in the Hinterland of Slovene Istria

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Within the region of Slovene Istria, there are significant socio-economic and physical-geographic differences. The coastal area is perceived as an economically highly developed area with strong and successful enterprise and tourism, a high level of urbanization, a developed infrastructure, and positive demographic and economic indicators.

In contrast, the regional countryside has been dealing with many problems in recent years and thus remains demographically, socially and economically underdeveloped. Despite high value and potential, the hinterland of Slovene Istria remains primarily »undiscovered« as a tourist destination. In our opinion, only sustainable types of tourism should be integrated and promoted in this hinterland area.

In our presentation we will focus on the main potentials:

- Establishment of the protected area “Regional park Dragonja”. This area is especially known for its rich natural values and cultural heritage. There were some unsuccessful attempts to establish the regional park in the past, but it has great potential for developing various types of sustainable tourism.
- Connect tourism with organic farming and introduce tourism on organic farms. Globally, ecotourism has grown rapidly in recent years, but it is not yet developed in Slovene Istria. There are no organic tourist farms with accommodation facilities in the area. Potential also exists to offer various types of so-called educational tourism on organic farms focusing on “profile groups”, for example: kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, faculties, pensioners, etc.

The hinterland of Slovene Istria is an area with high natural and cultural value. There is great potential for the development of protected areas and environmental-friendly activities (organic farming, ecotourism, various types of ‘green’ tourism, etc.) that will create new jobs and higher added value for the area under consideration. The combination of the above-mentioned activities could be a valued contri-

bution to proper (sustainable) development of the hinterland and its promotion as a 'natural' alternative to the development of the coastal part of Slovene Istria.

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