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[Razvojni center Srca Slovenije, d.o.o.]

Best Practices from the Heart of Slovenia

Activity 2. Survey

Mija Bokal
6-23-2025



Best Practice No. 1: Sustainable Carpentry and Circular Economy in a Local Family Business in the Heart of Slovenia

1. General Information

Best Practice Title: **Sustainable Carpentry and Circular Economy in a Local Family Business in the Heart of Slovenia**

Reference Sector: **Environmental and Technological, Tourism**

Country/Region of Implementation: **Slovenia/Heart of Slovenia**

Responsible Entity/Organization: **Mizarstvo Kos, d.o.o.**

Contact Information: Petra Kos, mizarstvo.kos@gmail.com

2. Best Practice Description

Main Objectives:

General Objective

- Promote sustainable wood-based craftsmanship and outdoor living environments that respect tradition, local resources, and community values.

Specific Objectives

- Maximize use of locally sourced Slovenian wood to support circular economy principles.
- Offer comprehensive planning and execution of outdoor wooden structures.
- Educate clients on sustainable materials, wood heritage, and design options.
- Expand the local tourism offer through the Lesarius sensory wood museum.

Brief Description:

Mizarstvo Kos is a multi-generational, family-run carpentry and outdoor design company based in Velika Preska, Slovenia. The company exemplifies principles of the European Green Deal through

its focus on sustainable wood use, circular economy, and community engagement. By sourcing 98% of their wood locally (mostly from nearby farmers and sawmills) they significantly reduce transport emissions and support local rural economies.

Their circular approach ensures that no wood goes to waste: premium wood is transformed into products, offcuts are used in a sensory museum for educational purposes, sawdust becomes animal bedding, and remaining biomass fuels heating systems.

The company has developed a design-to-installation process that enhances efficiency and minimizes waste. They founded a Center for Outdoor Design, bringing together 27 different professions for a holistic approach to outdoor living spaces.

In 2020, they established Lesarius, an innovative 7-sense sensory museum dedicated to traditional woodcrafts, offering a unique experience to the public and raising awareness about sustainable forestry and craftsmanship. The museum also supports education and outreach. Clients can receive individual consultations to help them plan environmentally conscious wood-based projects.

Mizarstvo Kos serves as an example of how small rural enterprises can make meaningful contributions to climate goals, sustainable innovation, and local economic resilience, aligning fully with European Green Deal priorities.

Implementation methods:

- Close cooperation with local stakeholders to strengthen the regional value chain.
- Integration of the full wood lifecycle – from premium product creation to reuse of offcuts for education, energy, or animal bedding.
- Custom, client-centered design approach supported by individual consultations and sustainable planning.
- Development of the Lesarius sensory museum as an educational and promotional tool for sustainability and craftsmanship.
- Active involvement in local community and EU-funded programs, workshops, and professional networks to support innovation and knowledge exchange.

Tools and methodologies:

- In-house project methodology combining environmental assessment, sustainable material planning, and waste management.
- Protocols for sustainable, traceable sourcing – with 98% of wood procured locally.
- Digital design tools tailored to efficient, sustainable outdoor and space solutions.
- Biomass-based energy system using production waste to fuel heating and reduce emissions.

- Educational and client engagement tools, including interactive museum exhibits and storytelling techniques.

Main Target Groups:

Direct beneficiaries

- Homeowners, businesses, and public institutions seeking bespoke outdoor carpentry.
- Individual tourists and educational groups visiting the Lesarius museum.
- Young professionals in the carpentry and design fields.

Indirect beneficiaries

- Local wood suppliers and craftsmen.
- Cultural and tourism stakeholders in the region.
- Local community benefiting from improved outdoor spaces and cultural heritage awareness.

Duration and Implementation Period:

- Start: Founded around 1981; evolved into advanced outdoor design by early 2000s.
- Lesarius Museum launch: 2020.
- Current phase: Ongoing expansion of projects, educational activities, and regional community engagement.
- Duration: Ongoing practice with emerging phases adapting to local demand and cultural trends.

3. Impacts and Results

Main Results Achieved:

- Over 2.000 diverse projects completed, from private balconies to public infrastructure.
- 98% local wood sourcing, demonstrating commitment to sustainable forestry and local economy.
- Full material utilization, adhering to the circular economy with zero waste practices.

- Successful launch of Lesarius museum, recognized among the top 20 EU projects in 2024 in Slovenia.
- Active educational outreach: exhibitions, consultations, and public events, like open museum days.

Success Indicators:

- Number of projects completed and wood sourced locally.
- Creation and operation of Lesarius museum and its visitor numbers.
- Certifications and local acknowledgments (e.g., quality "Heart of Slovenia" award, national EU project's award).
- Positive client feedback and repeat business from homeowners and institutions.

Benefits and Added Value:

- Environmental: Circular wood use; biomass heating; reduced transportation footprint.
- Social: Heritage education through the museum; public engagement; collaboration with multiple stakeholders.
- Economic: Support for local forestry; job creation; added value for clients; tourism appeal.
- Replicability: Model combines craftsmanship, sustainable materials, circular practices, and cultural education – easily adaptable in similar rural settings.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learned

Main Obstacles Faced:

- Scaling from traditional carpentry to integrated outdoor design required new partnerships and expertise across 27 professions.
- Maintaining quality standards while managing circular waste streams and educational components.
- Ensuring client understanding of sustainable planning via digital and paper-based processes.

Solutions:

- Built a trusted network of stakeholders (foresters, architects, craftsmen).

- Standardized a 7-step planning process to ensure transparency and alignment.
- Integrated museum offcuts into educational enrichment - tying project waste to cultural value.

Recommendations for Replicability:

- Anchor in local resources: Prioritize local wood and materials to benefit the environment and economy.
- Adopt circular practices: Find uses for all material by-products (e.g., biomass heating, museum exhibits, animal bedding).
- Systematize project delivery: Use clear multi-step design processes for efficiency and sustainability.
- Inject culture and education: Combine commercial services with public outreach to enhance social impact.
- Foster multi-stakeholder partnerships: Work with foresters, planners, tourism providers, LAG, and community groups for broader support.
- Champion heritage and innovation: Promote craft traditions but stay open to modern technologies and design methods.

5. Attachments and Resources

- Links to documents, reports, articles: <https://www.mizarstvo-kos.si/sl/>
- Photos, videos, or supporting materials
- Testimonials or interviews: [Interview with Petra Kos](#) (April 2025)

Best Practice No. 2: Healing Nature as a Model for Eco-Tourism Innovation in the Heart of Slovenia

1. General Information

Best Practice Title: **Healing Nature as a Model for Eco-Tourism Innovation in the Heart of Slovenia**

Reference Sector: **Wellness Tourism**

Country/Region of Implementation: **Slovenia/Heart of Slovenia**

Responsible Entity/Organization: **V D d.o.o.**

Contact Information: Katja Jelovčan, zdravilnigaj@gmail.com

2. Best Practice Description

Main Objectives:

General Objective

- Promote holistic, nature-based wellness tourism that integrates health, community, and sustainability.

Specific Objectives

- Introduce innovative therapeutic experiences using natural water and energies.
- Raise environmental awareness and sustainability among visitors and locals.
- Forge strong partnerships with local institutions and stakeholders.
- Enhance quality and credibility through certifications and technical excellence.

Brief Description:

V D Turizem d.o.o. is a remarkable example of how tourism can be developed in harmony with nature while supporting local communities and promoting personal well-being. Their flagship destination, the Natural Healing Resort Tunjice, goes far beyond conventional tourism models by embracing the principles of regenerative tourism - not only minimizing negative impacts but actively contributing to the restoration and strengthening of natural and social systems.

What makes this practice particularly relevant in the context of the European Green Deal is its integrated, sustainability-first approach. The resort was built using natural materials and designed with deep respect for the surrounding environment, carefully positioned around geological energy points that are believed to support human well-being. This approach reduces the need for artificial technologies and encourages a more conscious connection to the Earth.

The resort also strongly supports the local economy, sourcing food and materials from nearby farmers and producers. This reduces transportation emissions, fosters short supply chains, and builds lasting partnerships within the region. In addition, the resort operates on a low-waste philosophy, encouraging guests to adopt sustainable habits during their stay, such as composting, reuse, and mindful consumption.

What truly sets V D Turizem d.o.o. apart is their vision of tourism as a holistic wellness experience — one that integrates physical, emotional, and environmental health. The resort offers opportunities not just for rest, but for education and reconnection with nature, with community, and with oneself.

By combining sustainability, innovation, and well-being, V D Turizem d.o.o. offers a concrete example of how tourism can contribute meaningfully to the goals of the European Green Deal — including climate neutrality, biodiversity protection, circular economy, and resilient local development. Their model invites a broader reflection on how tourism can lead the way toward a more regenerative and connected way of living.

Implementation methods:

- Combining scientific wellness techniques (e.g., aura imaging, psychophysiological analysis) with traditional knowledge.
- Use of sustainable, locally sourced materials.
- Actively participating in the local community, EU-funded programs (LEADER/CLLD, Cosme, etc.), workshops, and networks.
- Maintaining scientific rigor via international congresses and partnerships.

Tools and methodologies:

- Technical innovation (Tungaj transformer system) for earth energy protection, certified via biological assays.
- Monitoring water quality, with special focus on microplastics.
- Introducing water sommelier services.
- Community education through guests, events, festivals, and local partnerships.

Main Target Groups:

Direct beneficiaries:

- Guests seeking holistic wellness experiences and microphone-free high-quality water.
- Local inhabitants, families, and children (through educational programs).
- Water sommelier trainees and wellness professionals.

Indirect beneficiaries:

- Local community (via tourism, infrastructure, and events).
- Local businesses, farmers, cultural organizations.
- Municipal and regional tourism development stakeholders.

Duration and Implementation Period:

- Start date: 1998 (initial discovery)
- Expansion phases:
 - Pilot entrance / spiritual energy center in 1998.
 - Aura room, meditative domes, and yurt added over subsequent years.
 - Eco-glamping launched ~2019.
 - Microplastic-free water station, with ongoing improvements.
- Estimated duration: Ongoing development, with continuous upgrades and planned infrastructure expansions.

3. Impacts and Results

Main Results Achieved:

- 25 years of impact and continuous operation.
- Launch of eco-glamping cottages attracting international guests.
- Creation of the world's first microplastic-free skin-clinic water station.
- Hosting visitors at glamping, open days, and wellness events.
- Strong local support evidenced by local engagement and funding.

Success Indicators:

- Long-term operation and growth over 25 years.
- Certification achievements (e.g., Tungaj transformer).
- Participation metrics: visitor numbers at events, wellness stays, water station usage.
- Awards and recognition at municipal and national levels.

Benefits and Added Value:

- Social: Enriched public awareness of water quality; new wellness career paths (water sommeliers); enhanced public health and community pride.
- Environmental: Reduced microplastic pollution; responsible resource use; sustainable architecture.
- Economic: Diversified eco-tourism, accommodation, and event revenues; local employment; regional tourism competitiveness.
- Replicability: modular approach to energy therapy, water stations, and eco-lodging can be adapted worldwide.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learned

Main Obstacles Faced:

- Technical complexity: High demands for certification and scientific testing (bioassays, microplastic filters).
- Environmental hazards: Natural threats, like landslides, require emergency evacuations and infrastructure adaptations.
- Manual systems: The initial microplastic-free station was manual; automation is in development.

Solutions:

- Adopted flexible, phased development with strong technical partnerships (research institutes).
- Developed crisis-response systems using local rescue services and adaptive resilience.
- Secured EU funding and local partnerships to support continuous upgrades and ecosystem integration.

Recommendations for Replicability:

- Start small, build stepwise: Begin with a simple wellness setup and scale through iterative phases.
- Invest in scientific validation: Collaborate with research institutes and ensure transparent testing and certification.
- Adopt holistic sustainability: Combine material choices, resource efficiency, and community engagement.
- Engage community early: Embed local stakeholders in planning, programming, and events.
- Diversify your offerings: Mix therapeutic services, eco-lodging, educational components, and unique innovations (e.g., microplastic-free water).
- Prepare for environmental risks: Develop adaptive infrastructure, emergency procedures, and community monitoring.

5. Attachments and Resources

- Links to documents, reports, articles: <https://www.zdravilnigaj.si/en/index.html>
- Photos, videos, or supporting materials
- Testimonials or interviews: [Interview with Katja Jelovčan](#) (April 2025)

Best Practice No. 3: Pioneering Green Innovation in Thermal Tourism in the Heart of Slovenia

1. General Information

Best Practice Title: **Pioneering Green Innovation in Thermal Tourism in the Heart of Slovenia**

Reference Sector: **Wellness Tourism**

Country/Region of Implementation: **Slovenia/Heart of Slovenia**

Responsible Entity/Organization: **Terme Snovik – Kamnik, d.o.o.**

Contact Information: Katarina Adam, katarina.adam@terme-snovik.si

2. Best Practice Description

Main Objectives:

General Objective

- Establish eco spa as a leading sustainable wellness destination rooted in Kneipp's holistic health philosophy and community integration.

Specific Objectives

- Deliver high-quality wellness experiences based on Kneipp's five pillars: water, movement, herbs, nutrition, and healthy lifestyle.
- Achieve ecological leadership through energy efficiency, resource conservation, and EU Ecolabel certification.
- Foster strong partnerships with local stakeholders and support regional sustainable development.
- Innovate through digital transformation to improve operational efficiency and guest satisfaction.

Brief Description:

Eco Spa Snovik is one of Slovenia's flagship examples of sustainable tourism in practice, embodying the core values of the European Green Deal long before sustainability became a mainstream goal. Nestled in the pristine natural surroundings, the resort has developed from a

single pilot pool in 1994 into a comprehensive wellness destination that integrates health, nature, and environmental responsibility.

From the outset, the resort has been guided by a deep commitment to eco-conscious development, renewable energy use, and the well-being of guests, employees, and the local community. Since 2007, the entire resort has operated 100 % on renewable energy (primarily local biomass), supporting not only climate goals but also local forest owners and the circular economy. Through intelligent resource use, such as reusing thermal water energy for other systems and installing smart room technologies, Eco Spa Snovik drastically reduces its environmental footprint while ensuring a high-quality guest experience. Its services reflect the holistic Kneipp philosophy, which promotes the balance of body, mind, and nature through hydrotherapy, movement, healthy diet, herbs, and inner calm.

As the resort evolves, its ambitions grow bolder. The new Kneipp Natur Hotel, currently under construction, exemplifies the next generation of green infrastructure: 96 % energy self-sufficiency through renewables, 40 % use of natural materials, smart architecture, and spaces designed for both healing and connection, including a conference centre and wellness areas.

The resort's strong integration of sustainable mobility options, digital upgrades for smart energy management, ISO environmental certifications, circular water and energy systems, and proactive guest and staff education on sustainability further position Eco Spa Snovik as a model of green transformation in the tourism sector.

Implementation methods:

- Integration of sustainability into the business processes, from energy systems and water usage to guest engagement and staff awareness.
- Close cooperation with the local community and municipality, especially in infrastructure upgrades and support for local forest owners through biomass sourcing within a 5 km radius.
- Pioneering use of renewable energy sources (100% since 2007), combining biomass, solar collectors, and heat pumps for heating pools and facilities.
- Smart reuse of resources – e.g., waste heat from pools is redirected to saunas and snow melting systems, while every drop of water is used twice where possible.
- Continuous investment in staff education and digitalization, such as the implementation of a modern CNS building management system via digital vouchers.
- Development of new sustainable infrastructure (e.g. the Kneipp Nature Hotel with 96% renewable energy self-sufficiency and 40% use of natural materials).

Tools and methodologies:

- ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certificates for quality and environmental management.

- EU Ecolabel – one of the first in Slovenia to obtain this certification for eco-friendly tourist accommodation.
- Energy bookkeeping since 2007 to monitor guest-related energy and water use per night.
- Internal sustainability education programs for employees and guests.
- Eco-solutions: smart rooms with climate control linked to window sensors, water-saving aerators, and herbal and vegetable gardens integrated into guest experiences.
- Kneipp philosophy as a guiding methodology – focusing on the synergy of water, movement, herbs, healthy food, and mental balance in tourism offerings.
- Digital monitoring and optimization of building operations via the CNS system.
- Active participation in the Slovenia Green scheme as a certified green provider.

Main Target Groups:

Direct beneficiaries:

- Wellness tourists seeking natural, holistic experiences.
- Regional visitors enjoying pools, forest trails, and eco-camping.
- Employees benefiting from improved working conditions and training.

Indirect beneficiaries:

- Local suppliers, farmers, craftsmen, and small businesses.
- Kamnik municipality and tourism stakeholders.
- Broader Tuhinjska dolina community through events and employment.

Duration and Implementation Period:

- Start: Pilot thermal pool in 1994.
- Recognition: Awarded EU Ecolabel in 2007.
- Expansion: Eco-camp opened in 2024; Kneipp Natur Hotel stone laid in November 2024; hotel opening planned for 2026.
- Digital transformation: January–September 2022.

- Current state: Ongoing enhancements (e.g., wellness expansion, bike paths, hotel prep).

3. Impacts and Results

Main Results Achieved:

- Over 2.9 M bathers welcomed to the thermal pools since opening; 207.960 guests from 123 countries stayed in the forest-edge cabin settlement, generating 651.899 overnight stays and contributing 620.000 EUR in tourist tax revenue.
- Eco camp constructed using local wood and craftsmanship, reinforcing regional identity.
- Recognized as Slovenia's first thermal spa to obtain the EU Ecolabel, which it has retained continuously.
- Over 10,000 schoolchildren participated in ecology-themed technical days and workshops.

Success Indicators:

- EU Ecolabel retention; ISO certifications; energy usage metrics.
- Visitor metrics: bathers, overnight stays, events, guest satisfaction.
- Expansion milestones: new eco-camp, hotel construction, digital system usage.
- Regional engagement via community forums and collaboration.

Benefits and Added Value:

- Environmental: comprehensive renewable energy use, water recycling, waste heat usage, smart resource systems.
- Social: employment growth; educational outreach; community integration.
- Economic: diversification into eco-tourism; extended season; support for local economy.
- Scalability: model demonstrates replicability for eco-driven wellness resorts.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learned

Main Obstacles Faced:

- Complex certification and tech systems required significant investment.

- Integration of digital systems demanded upskilling and technical coordination.
- Scaling wellness facilities and mobility infrastructure during seasonal and pandemic pressures.
- The lack of employees.

Solutions:

- Phased infrastructure development supported by EU and national funding.
- Collaborations with local experts, digital consultants, and university partners for system integration.
- Building resilience through diversified offerings (wellness, camping, events) and rapid market adaptation.
- Building a kind, modern, and sustainable working environment; cooperation with local associations, schools.

Recommendations for Replicability:

- Embed sustainability as core strategy: pursue renewable energy, Ecolabel, ISO, water, and energy efficiency from the outset.
- Adopt a phased scaling approach: start with pools, add camps, wellness, and then a hotel to spread cost and gain support.
- Integrate digital solutions: CNS, CRM, energy monitoring for operational efficiency and data-driven decisions.
- Engage local community: involve stakeholders in planning, employment, services, events, and infrastructure.
- Champion holistic wellness: build offerings around Kneipp's five pillars and reinforce narrative with education and programming.
- Secure external financial support: leverage EU, national, and local funding to enable capital-intensive green investments.

5. Attachments and Resources

- Links to documents, reports, articles: <https://www.termesnovik.si/en/eco>
- Photos, videos, or supporting materials
- Testimonials or interviews: [Interview with Katarina Adam](#) (April 2025)

Best Practice No. 4: Natural and Sustainable Building in the Heart of Slovenia

1. General Information

Best Practice Title: **Natural and Sustainable Building in the Heart of Slovenia**

Reference Sector: **Environmental and Technological, Construction**

Country/Region of Implementation: **Slovenia/Heart of Slovenia**

Responsible Entity/Organization: **Exo Konstrukcije d.o.o.**

Contact Information: Anže Kveder, info@exo-konstrukcije.si

2. Best Practice Description

Main Objectives:

General Objective

- Promote sustainable, nature-friendly construction and traditional building wisdom.

Specific Objectives

- Implement environmentally friendly building solutions using wood, clay, hemp, and other natural materials.
- Raise awareness about healthy, energy-balanced living environments.
- Develop and execute turnkey renovations and new construction projects using sustainable materials.
- Inspire trust in wooden construction through education, best practices, and practical examples.

Brief Description:

Exo Konstrukcije d.o.o. is a Slovenian construction company led by Anže Kveder. Rooted in a passion for natural materials and a deep respect for traditional building knowledge, the company

champions sustainable wooden construction as a conscious and future-oriented choice – not as a passing trend, but as a way of life.

Founded in 2020, Exo Konstrukcije has quickly emerged as a key advocate and implementer of green building practices in Slovenia. The company specializes in the use of wood, clay, hemp, cork, and other breathable materials that create healthy and energy-efficient living environments. Their approach combines modern construction techniques with the wisdom of ancestral building methods, often integrating lessons learned from international collaborations and fairs.

Key strengths of Exo Konstrukcije include:

- Strong focus on locally and regionally sourced wood and other non-toxic, renewable materials that support human health and environmental sustainability.
- The team minimizes construction waste, reuses materials when possible, and chooses suppliers who prioritize ecological responsibility.
- Every project starts with an in-depth client consultation and a careful observation of terrain, natural light, and site specifics, ensuring that each design harmonizes with both the user and the environment.
- A growing number of clients seek to upgrade existing buildings. Exo Konstrukcije specializes in combining preserved traditional structures with lightweight wooden extensions, making the old new again.
- In recent flood events, their prefabricated wooden structures demonstrated exceptional adaptability, drying faster and requiring less invasive remediation than conventional masonry buildings.
- With 12 dedicated professionals, the company is small enough to stay agile and client-focused, yet experienced enough to manage complex builds on multiple sites.

Exo Konstrukcije is not just a builder of structures, but a builder of awareness. By promoting wood as a renewable, efficient, and beautiful construction material, they actively contribute to the goals of the European Green Deal – reducing carbon emissions, enhancing resource efficiency, and fostering a healthier built environment for generations to come.

Implementation methods:

- A holistic approach to sustainable construction – each project begins with thorough observation of the location and a detailed discussion with the client to create a healthy, energy-efficient, and natural living environment.
- Use of local, natural materials – including wood, clay, and hemp, selected for their low carbon footprint and non-toxic properties, always respecting natural principles.

- Collaboration with various professionals – working together with a wide network of Slovenian companies and craftsmen to carry out turnkey projects or act as subcontractors.
- Client education and consultation – raising awareness about the benefits of natural construction and tailoring solutions to client needs and expectations.
- Application of traditional building knowledge – incorporating practical and time-tested solutions passed down from previous generations into modern construction methods.

Tools and methodologies:

- Sustainable building practices based on circular economy principles – minimizing waste, choosing breathable, natural materials, and taking a comprehensive approach to planning and execution.
- Blending local expertise with international best practices – continuous learning through fairs, partnerships with suppliers, and adopting emerging trends.
- Network-based cooperation model with a group of well-skilled partners.
- Hands-on craftsmanship and deep material understanding – skills acquired through years of independent work, complemented by international training and field experience.

Main Target Groups:

Direct beneficiaries

- Homeowners interested in natural renovation or sustainable new builds.
- Municipalities and institutions exploring green construction options.
- Construction professionals seeking collaboration or subcontracting.

Indirect beneficiaries

- Local material suppliers and sustainable construction advocates.
- Young families investing in older property renovation.
- Broader community benefitting from healthier, greener housing solutions.

Duration and Implementation Period:

- Company founded: 4 years ago.
- Wooden construction specialization: Ongoing for 2.5 years.
- Evolution: Progressive development from basic projects to holistic building transformations.

- Duration: Ongoing, long-term initiative.

3. Impacts and Results

Main Results Achieved:

- A wide range of completed projects across Slovenia, from facades and roofs to CLT structures and energy-efficient prefabricated houses.
- Successfully implemented circular economy practices in building material use.
- Supported flood-affected communities with sustainable renovation guidance.
- Increased awareness and interest in natural construction methods.

Success Indicators:

- Number of projects completed with natural materials.
- Repeat business and client satisfaction.
- Participation in regional sustainability initiatives and public speaking.
- Inclusion in regional green networks.

Benefits and Added Value:

- Environmental: Reduction in toxic materials, minimized waste, breathable materials, and lower carbon footprint.
- Social: Healthier indoor environments, community resilience, better air quality.
- Economic: Support for niche natural material markets; job creation; growing trust in green renovations.
- Replicability: Easily applicable model for rural or urban sustainable renovation, especially in flood-prone or older building areas.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learned

Main Obstacles Faced:

- Low awareness and demand for natural materials due to higher initial costs.
- Limited access to Slovenian wood; reliant on Austrian suppliers.

- Complexity of holistic renovation planning.

Solutions:

- Built a reliable and professional team covering both modern and traditional building expertise.
- Developed partnerships with like-minded professionals and suppliers.
- Engaged in public education and flood recovery consultations to build trust and visibility.

Recommendations for Replicability:

- Combine tradition with innovation: apply lessons from ancestral construction with modern sustainability goals.
- Educate and engage clients: awareness is key to increasing demand.
- Promote full-cycle natural material use and sourcing partnerships.
- Advocate for better national support and subsidies for natural construction.
- Focus on quality, transparency, and collaborative knowledge exchange.
- Seek for collaboration and connect into networks.

5. Attachments and Resources

- Links to documents, reports, articles: <https://exokonstrukcije.si/>
- Photos, videos, or supporting materials
- Testimonials or interviews: [Interview with Anže Kveder](#) (July 2025)

Best Practice No. 5: Eco-Friendly Microorganism-Based Solutions for Agriculture and the Environment in the Heart of Slovenia

1. General Information

Best Practice Title: **Eco-Friendly Microorganism-Based Solutions for Agriculture and the Environment in the Heart of Slovenia**

Reference Sector: **Environmental Protection, Sustainable Agriculture**

Country/Region of Implementation: **Slovenia/Heart of Slovenia**

Responsible Entity/Organization: **Domis-Milorad Domanović s.p.**

Contact Information: Milorad Domanović, info@domis.si

2. Best Practice Description

Main Objectives:

General Objective

- Promote sustainable, chemical-free agriculture and ecological regeneration of natural environments using effective microorganisms (EM).

Specific Objectives

- Develop and promote certified, microorganism-based products for organic and regenerative agriculture.
- Offer affordable, nature-based alternatives to chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
- Improve soil fertility and plant resistance using living microorganisms.
- Restore polluted water bodies through microbiological methods without mechanical intervention.
- Reduce green waste in urban areas via microbial composting solutions.
- Test and introduce environmentally friendly urban greening solutions, such as moss coatings for cooling buildings.

- Raise public awareness about ecological practices and foster cross-generational learning.
- Create bridges between Slovenian and Serbian communities by sharing ecological know-how and collaborating on practical field applications.

Brief Description:

This best practice showcases the cross-border work of DOMIS, a micro-enterprise founded by Milorad Domanović, based in Polšnik, Slovenia. DOMIS focuses on the development, small-scale production, and field testing of biological products that promote soil health, plant vitality, and environmental restoration. The enterprise builds on a deep understanding of natural systems and microbiology, offering simple, affordable, and certified ecological solutions based on effective microorganisms (EM).

DOMIS operates in close cooperation with a partner company in Serbia, which implements these innovations on a larger scale in agriculture and environmental projects. All products are tested in real-world conditions, in Slovenia or Serbia, before being made available to the public. DOMIS represents a unique entrepreneurial model grounded in ecological values, science-based innovation, and strong community engagement.

Although not directly created in response to the European Green Deal, DOMIS addresses many of its core priorities in practice: regenerative agriculture without chemicals, restoration of ecosystems and soil health, circular use of organic waste, and innovative, nature-based solutions for climate adaptation in urban areas.

Through its hands-on, low-tech, and community-based approach, DOMIS exemplifies how small, locally rooted businesses can meaningfully contribute to Europe's green transition - not only in rural but also in urban and cross-border contexts.

Implementation methods:

- Field testing on personal gardens in Slovenia and Serbia.
- Collaboration with farmers, towns, municipalities, researchers, and NGOs.
- Use of EM-based natural preparations for soil, plants, and organic waste.
- Awareness-raising through workshops, public events, and social media.
- Tailored solutions for individuals and communities (e.g. eco-toilets, water revitalization).

Tools and methodologies:

- EM preparations for soil improvement, plant care, composting, and water purification.
- Low-tech, user-friendly solutions requiring no industrial equipment.
- Pilot projects (lakes, public spaces, urban microclimate).

- Regenerative approach based on beneficial microorganisms.
- Knowledge sharing via mentoring, social networks, and hands-on practice.

Main Target Groups:

Direct beneficiaries

- Organic farmers and gardeners.
- Towns and municipalities.
- Ecological NGOs and other organisations interested in sustainable practices.

Indirect beneficiaries

- Broader rural and urban populations benefiting from cleaner soil, water, and air.
- Local communities engaged in environmental education.

Duration and Implementation Period:

- Since 2002 (ongoing).
- There has been intensified development in agriculture and ecological applications since 2013.

3. Impacts and Results

Main Results Achieved:

- Development of two certified EM-based products suitable for organic farming (EM Naturally Active Green and EM5 Vital Plant Purple).
- Pilot implementation of microorganism-based lake revitalization in Serbia, with measurable sludge reduction (17 cm in one year).
- Creation of an eco-toilet additive for composting using fermented wheat bran.
- Pilot project for growing moss on urban concrete surfaces as a natural insulation method.
- Testing and verification of all products in real environments (gardens in Slovenia and Serbia).

Success Indicators:

- Number of liters of product produced annually (up to 14,000 liters).
- Number of farms and municipalities using the solutions.
- Certifications obtained and intellectual property protections.
- Measured reduction of pollutants and improvement in soil/water quality.
- Partnerships with scientific institutions, towns and local communities.

Benefits and Added Value:

- Environmental: regeneration of soil, water purification using natural methods, reduction of chemical inputs, and improved biodiversity.
- Social: community engagement through festivals, education on ecology for children, and knowledge-sharing with farmers.
- Economic: affordable alternative to chemical fertilizers and pesticides; creation of cross-border eco-business; potential for green jobs.
- Replicability: high – products and methods are simple, tested, and cost-effective; adaptable to other regions with similar environmental challenges.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learned

Main Obstacles Faced:

- Regulatory barriers in Slovenia regarding the composting of green waste.
- Limited public understanding of the benefits of EM technology.
- Lack of financial support for scientific validation in early stages.
- Complex bureaucratic procedures when operating between Slovenia and Serbia, particularly due to Serbia not being an EU member state.

Solutions:

- Developed projects first in Serbia, where legislation is more flexible.
- Focused on direct education and community involvement (e.g., through gardening and children's festivals).
- Built collaborations with scientists and universities to strengthen credibility and research backing.

- Adapted business models to navigate cross-border regulations, using dual legal entities and leveraging local partnerships to reduce administrative friction.

Recommendations for Replicability:

- Start with small-scale pilot projects in collaboration with local users.
- Ensure products are tested in real conditions and backed by certifications.
- Focus on direct communication and building trust with users.
- Tailor strategies to the specific legal and cultural context of each region.

5. Attachments and Resources

- Links to documents, reports, articles:
<https://www.domis.si/>
<https://www.facebook.com/EMTehnologijaRS>
- Photos, videos, or supporting materials
- Testimonials or interviews: [Interview with Milorad Domanović](#) (July 2025)