

# PAMETNA INTEGRACIJA POLITIK EU ZA TRAJNOSTNI RAZVOJ

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**Povzetek:** Prispevek predstavlja, kako se različne politike EU odražajo v predstavljenih dobrih praksah, in osvetli prispevke teh politik k razvoju integralnih zelenih rešitev v Sloveniji. »Pametna integracija EU politik za trajnostni razvoj«, ki že deluje v praksi, lahko predstavlja bistveno značilnost slovenskega in evropskega integralnega zelenega modela: pametna integracija in učinkovita implementacija politik EU, ki temeljijo na načelih trajnostnega razvoja, kot so zeleno in krožno gospodarstvo, socialno gospodarstvo in družbeno odgovorno podjetništvo, etično bančništvo ter trajnostni razvoj mest in podeželja s prehransko in energetske samozadostnostjo (sinergije in med-sektorski pristop).

V skladu s konceptom pametne integracije bo nadalje predstavljena teza, da predstavlja ozelenjeno sektorsko programiranje v okviru instrumentov, ki jih je razvila Evropska unija, osnovo za trajnostnost in socialno odgovornost v Sloveniji. Ob določenih pogojih lahko ti instrumenti predstavljajo tudi učinkovito orodje za podporo ciljem Integralne zelene Slovenije.

Strateška presoja vplivov na okolje predstavlja orodje za zagotovitev odprtega in transparentnega procesa, v katerega so vključena odgovorna ministrstva, organizacije in širša javnost. Izvaja se za programe in plane za vse sektorje, kot so kmetijstvo, gozdarstvo, ribištvo, energetiko, industrijo, transport, ravnanje z odpadki, upravljanje voda, telekomunikacije, turizem, prostorsko načrtovanje in raba prostora. Ob upoštevanju mnenj vseh deležnikov so na koncu procesa potrjeni le okoljsko sprejemljivi programi in plani, ki upoštevajo okolje, vključno z biotsko raznovrstnostjo, prebivalci, zdravje prebivalcev, favno, floro, tla, vode, zrak, klimo, materialne dobrine, kulturno dediščino, vključno z arhitekturno in arheološko, krajino in njihove medsebojne povezave.

**Ključne besede:** politike EU, trajnostni razvoj, pametna integracija, strateška presoja vplivov na okolje, Slovenija, integralno zeleno gospodarstvo

## SMART INTEGRATION OF EU POLICIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Abstract:** In the final paper of the panel on Integral Green Slovenia we will summarize how various EU policies are reflected in the presented good practices, and highlight contributions of these policies to the development of integral green solutions in Slovenia. "Smart integration of EU policies for sustainable development" that already works in practice can offer an essential feature of the Slovenian and European integral green model: smart integration and effective implementation of EU developmental policies based on sustainable development principles, such as the green and circular economy, social economy and socially

responsible entrepreneurship, ethical banking, and sustainable development of towns and rural areas with food and energy self-supply (synergies and cross-sector approach).

In accordance with the concept of smart integration the thesis will be further presented that the green sectorial programming through instruments developed in the EU constitutes the basis for sustainability and social responsibility in Slovenia and generates its important pillar. Under certain conditions, these instruments can also become efficient tools for supporting “integral green economy” goals and could be developed further.

Strategic environmental assessment provides a tool for ensuring an open and transparent process in which the responsible ministries, organisations and the public are included. It applies to all sectors including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning and land use. Taking into account opinions of all stakeholders, at the end of administrative procedures, the approved programmes must be environmentally acceptable, wherein environment, biodiversity, the population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climate, material assets, the cultural heritage, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelation between them are properly addressed and integrated.

**Keywords:** EU policies, sustainable development, smart integration, strategic environmental assessment, integral green development, Slovenia

## 1. Introduction

One of the key distinctive features of the Slovenian model of integral green development is its embeddedness in the policy framework of the European Union. We don't build a new development model *from the scratch*; quite the opposite, our argument is that a number of existing policies and guidelines, measures and instruments across several policy domains are already supporting sustainable development goals and the integral green model of development. We can consider them as EU policies for sustainable development. On the other hand, one can observe that sustainable development is often impeded by certain other policies, i.e. macroeconomic and fiscal policies. Already proven advantages and strengths of the social responsibility principles and integral economy model lead us to the assumption that by placing values of social responsibility and sustainability in the centre of an economic model and, at the same time, by strongly relying on four dimensions of sustainable development (i.e., environment, society, economy, as well as culture) we could outweigh the unsustainable policy impulses. Drawing the threads together of our integral green argument, we can relate it to several existing EU policies for sustainable development (such as the green and social economy, social responsibility, organic food and energy self-supply), with a view to “smart integration” of such.

## 2. “Smart integration” in practice

As empirical contributions to the panel have revealed, “smart integration” of EU policies for sustainable development is already happening and occurs in various ways, e.g.:

- The most obvious are effects of the complex structure of programs supporting projects and operations. Financial means to support the integral green practices came from national and regional programs of the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Cohesion Fund; the Rural Development Programme, the LIFE programme; Intelligent Energy Europe; R&D and Innovation programs (Horizon 2020); programs to support cross-border cooperation and macro-regional priorities; and through several other financial and programming mechanisms.
- Following EU guidelines, like the ones towards green economy, in an innovative way – e.g. the EU directive with regard to eco-design requirements for vacuum cleaners in the case of Domel – cannot only ensure survival of companies; it rather can even help them to become world leaders in market niches.
- Possibilities for networking and cooperation within the EU and also with third countries are innumerable (e.g., BC Naklo with Iceland, the Heart of Slovenia, associations of cooperatives, European Rural Parliament, ...).

Exploring the above mentioned documents on EU and national levels from the perspectives of sustainable development and integral green economy, we can list several relevant policies such as green, low-carbon and circular economy, social economy with cooperatives and social enterprises, ethical banking, social responsibility, and sustainable development of towns and rural areas with food and energy self-supply (synergies and cross-sector approach).

### 3. Concept of sustainable development with four dimensions and green and social economy

Since the EU policy to support social responsibility has already been considered in the contribution by Mulej and Hrast, we will review a few relevant sources on green and social economy and culture as the fourth dimension of SD.

UNEP (2011) defines a green economy as »one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. In a green economy, growth in income and employment should be driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. These investments need to be catalysed and supported by targeted public expenditure, policy reforms and regulation changes«. According to EEA, in balancing environmental, economic and social elements, the green economy concept evidently has much in common with the notion of sustainable development — albeit with a focus primarily on the environmental and economic aspects. (EEA website)

Cooperatives and social enterprises at the first glance do not have a lot in common with sustainable development. However, the European Parliament noted, *inter alia*, »that cooperatives therefore play a very important role in the EU in economic, social, sustainable development, and employment terms, in addition to being a springboard for social innovation, which is a very important topic in both the EU 2020 strategy and Horizon 2020, and help to serve the objective of the sustainable economic and social development of regional and local communities« (2013). According to CICOPA, the interpretation of the cooperative principle of concern for the community in 21<sup>st</sup> Century reality necessarily included a strong social and environmental impact (Roelands, 2013).

More scientists and institutions in the field of sustainable development suggested that the traditional three dimensions need addition: a fourth dimension of sustainable development - culture - as it shows that the previous three cannot adequately reflect the complexity of modern society. Culture namely ultimately creates what we consider sustainable development and determines how people act in the world. The relationship between culture and sustainable development is considered in two senses: as the development of the cultural sector (e.g. heritage, cultural industries, crafts, cultural tourism) and by providing an appropriate place of culture in all public policies. (UCLG, 2010) UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003) provided a turning point with its statement on the economic potential of heritage as a guarantee of sustainable development. Regional development based on intangible heritage, opens to humans new opportunities for the development of entrepreneurship and innovation, and significantly improves the quality of life, since it derives from the people and their potentials. (Belingar, Kavs, (2014)

### 4. Strategic environmental assessment

Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is a tool for ensuring an open and transparent process in which the responsible ministries, organisations and the public are included. It applies to all sectors including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning and land use. Taking into account opinions of all stakeholders, at the end of administrative procedures, the approved programmes must be environmentally acceptable, wherein environment, biodiversity, the population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climate, material assets, the cultural heritage, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelation between them is properly addressed and integrated. The reasonable alternatives are also evaluated during the strategic environmental assessment.

The term SEA is now widely used to refer to a systematic process of analysing the environmental effects of policies, plans and programmes (Sadler, 2005). Its benefit has already been recognised on cases all over the world (OECD, 2006), when the EU decide to accept the Directive 2001/42/EC called SEA directive. On its base all EU countries developed their transposition and implementation in parallel and on different cases.

Slovenia transposed the European legislation into its legal order in 2004 and was one of the first new Member States to use European common funds to upgrade and develop legal, administrative and other measures. The transposition and implementation of two important horizontal directives, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) belong to the bases for sustainable development goals.

Slovenia has transposed the SEA Directive into the Environmental Law in 2004 and after 10 years of application the instrument was recognised as important tool for greening programmes and plans. Good practice examples have been developed on local and national spatial planning acts and on many operational programmes. Therefore important connections between the EU funds, operational programmes and plans and projects on the field can be shown.

By using SEA as ex-ante conditionality in new financial perspective Europe has straighten its way towards the horizontal checking and sustainability.

## 5. Plans and programmes

Practical experiences with Strategic Environmental Assessment for the programming period 2007-2014 and for the new programming period, which are important bases for the projects and measures shown in the model of Integral Green Slovenia, are as follows: the Operational Programme for the new financial period 2014-2020, Rural Development Plan, the Fishery Programme, four Cross Border Programmes and the Transport Strategy, National Spatial Plans, local communities land-use plans, and transnational programmes.

The most important examples are the 'Rural development plan' and 'Operational programme for regional development'. For both SEA has been applied. Firstly, screening was organised by the ministry, responsible for environment, in consultation with different authorities, then SEA report was prepared and public consultation was settled. The environment was integrated into the plans in accordance with the concept of smart integration; at the end of the process green plans were developed, which contributed to sustainability. In the process of SEA mitigation measures the green measures are included in plans and programmes. These are measures in the direction of Integral Green Slovenia development inside the programmes and plans that have the potential to support further good practice cases in the future programming period 2014-2020.

Thus, theoretically the framework programmes for further sustainable development in Slovenia are prepared in the framework of European policies as "ex-ante" evaluation; the "ex-post" evaluation will show if all institutions in the process have carried out their tasks with respect to the values of responsibility and social responsibility.

The next challenge is good governance: efficient and responsible use of funds, upgrading and developing of ideas with added value. A responsible, skilled, organised administrative expert level on the national and local levels is needed as well as very responsible project managers and engineers, connected in trustful high professional network. This is a basis for cooperation, supporting each other in good practice and innovation in the framework of the rules and with respect to sustainability and social responsibility.

In accordance with the concept of smart integration we can confirm the thesis that green sectorial programming through instruments developed in the EU constitutes an important basis for sustainability and social responsibility in Slovenia. Projects which are developed by the »bottom up« approach on the field and green programmes developed »bottom down« at the highest programming level and with cooperation with EU meet in practice, when the public tenders for programmes are open. Because programmes include measures to support the green actions and sustainable measures, the green projects are supported and could be implemented.

## 6. Conclusion

As we have demonstrated, the unique processes of social innovation described in several practical cases can also be explained as building on the paradigm of sustainable development that encompasses four dimensions (i.e., economy, environment, society, and culture), with particular emphasis on values of sustainability and social responsibility. "Smart integration of EU policies for sustainable development" that already works in practice can be an essential feature of the Slovenian and also European integral green model.

Another essential feature includes effective mechanisms that support implementation of such a model. Definition of SEA and its description shows that this instrument goes beyond pure environmental dimension of sustainable development. Since it is a well thought-out and well-established instrument, it can be a model for other instruments, or it can also be upgraded to include all the criteria relevant for Integral Green Slovenia.

In addition to a transdisciplinary, transcultural and transformative conceptual framework, convincing practical examples and effective task force, social innovations supporting a new development model towards sustainability - to cope more successfully and on a long-term basis with current and future challenges - requires also well founded and systematically executed analytical methodology. SEA offers an important instrument of this methodology and could be also further developed to apply to financial programmes.

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