

KORAKI K CELOVITI KROŽNI IN PRAVIČNI TRANSFORMACIJI REGIJE

STEPS TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE CIRCULAR AND JUST TRANSITION OF THE REGION

Krožna akademija Zasavja - Kako postati evropski svetilnik sprememb
Zasavje Circular Academy – How to Become the European Lighthouse of Change



Sofinancira
Evropska unija



REGIONALNA
RAZVOJNA
AGENCIJA
ZASAVJE





POPOTNICA NOSILCEM PRAVIČNEGA IN KROŽNEGA PREHODA



**Regionalna razvojna agencija Zasavje,
v.d. direktorja**

Krožna ekonomija je temelj prihodnosti, ki jo želimo oblikovati – prihodnosti, kjer trajnost in inovacije sobivajo za dobrobit našega planeta in kakovosti življenja. Krožna akademija Zasavja, izvedena v okviru pravičnega prehoda Zasavja, je bila korak v to smer. Z lokalnimi deležniki smo dokazali, da Zasavje lahko postane vodilni primer krožnih praks. Hvala vsem, ki ustvarjate to zgodbo trajnosti in priložnosti!



GUIDE TO A JUST AND CIRCULAR TRANSITION

**Zasavje Regional Development Agency,
Acting Director**

The circular economy is the foundation of the future we aspire to create – a future where sustainability and innovation coexist for the well-being of our planet and the improvement of our quality of life. The Zasavje Circular Academy, implemented as part of the Zasavje Just Transition initiative, was a step towards this vision. By working together with local stakeholders, we have proven that Zasavje can become a leading example of circular practices. Thank you to everyone co-creating this story of sustainability and opportunity!



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Grafični zapisi / Graphic recordings: Mireille van Bremen, The Visual Mediator

Naročnik / Client: Regionalna razvojna agencija Zasavje – Center za pravični prehod Zasavja / Zasavje Regional Development Agency – Zasavje Just Transition Center

Tisk / Printing: Toriprint d.o.o.

Ljubljana, November 2024



**Regionalna razvojna agencija Zasavje,
Strokovni sodelavec na oddelku za pravični
prehod in projekte**

Center za pravični prehod Zasavja spodbuja trajnostni razvoj regije z uvajanjem krožnih praks, ki poleg okoljskih koristi prinašajo tudi izboljšanje ekonomskega kozalnikov. Krožni principi, kot so souporaba virov, izmenjava presežkov energije, podaljševanje življenjske dobe izdelkov, popravila, razvoj in uporaba naravnih materialov in preoblikovanje odpadkov v surovine, dokazujojo, da krožni (poslovni) modeli temeljijo najprej na učinkoviti organizaciji in sodelovanju, šele nato na investicijah. Skupnost Krožna akademija Zasavja si prizadeva, da Zasavje postane evropska pilotna regija celovite krožne in pravične transformacije.

**LADEJA
GODINA KOŠIR**



**Circular Change – Institut za krožno
gospodarstvo, Ustanoviteljica in izvršna
direktorica**

Iz črnega v zeleno – z ambiciozno vizijo, postati svetilnik pravičnega in krožnega prehoda v EU, smo se v okviru Krožne akademije Zasavja podali na pot oblikovanja konkretnih projektov, ki bodo vizijo z ravni zamisljanja prevedli v vsakdanji utrip regije. Vabljeni, da s pomočjo te publikacije našo zgodbo podrobnejše spozname in dobite navdih, da bo tudi v vaši regiji življenje izpolnjujoče, ustvarjalno in kakovostno!



**Zasavje Regional Development Agency,
Technical Assistant at Just Transition and
Projects Department**

The Zasavje Just Transition Center supports the sustainable development of the region by introducing circular practices that provide not only environmental benefits but also improve economic indicators. Circular principles - including resource sharing, energy surplus exchange, extending product lifespans, repairing items, developing and using natural materials and transforming waste into raw materials - highlight that circular (business) models are primarily based on efficient organization and collaboration, with investments playing a supporting role. The community of the Zasavje Circular Academy is committed to making Zasavje a European pilot region for comprehensive circular and just transition.

**Circular Change – Institut for Circular
Economy, Founder and Executive Director**

From Black to Green – with an ambitious vision of becoming a beacon for a just and circular transition in the EU, the Zasavje Circular Academy embarked on a journey to develop concrete projects that translate this vision from ideas into the everyday rhythm of the region. We invite you to explore our story in this publication and find inspiration to bring fulfilling, creative, and high-quality living to your own region!



KLJUČNI IGRALCI IN DELEŽNIKI



KEY PLAYERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Center za pravični prehod Zasavja (CPPZ) je osrednja informacijska in podpora točka, ki lokačno skupnost, državo in Evropsko unijo povezuje v preobrazbi Zasavja iz premogovne v visokotehnološko in nizkoogljično regijo. Ustanovljen je bil leta 2023 na Regionalni razvojni agenciji Zasavje, za katerega je agencija pridobila tudi dodatna sredstva iz tehnične pomoči Sklada za pravični prehod. Center je informacijsko središče, vstopna točka za vse deležnike prestrukturiranja regije ter glavna podpora struktura pri izvajanju aktivnosti pravičnega prehoda v regiji.

Regionalna razvojna agencija Zasavje (RRA Zasavje) je javni zavod, ustanovljen s strani vseh štirih zasavskih občin. Od vpisa v evidenco regionalnih razvojnih agencij s strani Ministrstva za gospodarski razvoj in tehnologijo v juliju 2016, je RRA Zasavje nosilna institucija regionalnega razvoja v Zasavski razvojni regiji v programske obdobju 2014 - 2020 ter 2021 - 2027. RRA Zasavje opravlja splošne razvojne naloge. Pripravlja, usklaja, spremlja in vrednoti regionalni razvojni program, dogovor za razvoj regije in regijske projekte. Nudi strokovno in tehnično podporo delovanju sveta regije in razvojnega sveta regije in vodi regijsko razvojno mrežo.

Institut za krožno gospodarstvo - »najboljša vstopna točka za vaše krožno potovanje«. V globalnem prostoru z najrazličnejšimi deležniki sodelujemo pri implementaciji krožnega gospodarstva, v Bruslu že sedmo leto so-predsedujemo Evropski deležniški platformi za krožno gospodarstvo (ECESP), Krožna akademija Zasavja pa je edinstven dragulj v naboru naših referenc.

The Visual Mediator deluje kot most med zapletenimi idejami in publiko z uporabo vizualnih orodij za razjasnitve, predstavitev ter interpretacijo informacij. Z grafičnim snemanjem pogovorov in vizualnim olajšanjem procesov Visual Mediator podpira, da vse deležniki strani spregovorijo enotno, kar omogoča ustvarjanje skupne vizije prihodnosti, ki so ji zavezani vsi deležniki.

Zasavje Just Transition Center (ZJTC) is the central information and support point connecting the local community, the state, and the European Union in transforming Zasavje from a coal-mining region to a high-tech and low-carbon one. Established in 2023 at the Zasavje Regional Development Agency, the center also secured additional funding from the technical assistance of the Just Transition Fund. The center serves as an information hub, an entry point for all stakeholders involved in the region's restructuring, and the main support structure for implementing Just Transition activities in the region.

Zasavje Regional Development Agency (RRA Zasavje) is a public institution established by all four municipalities of Zasavje. Since its registration in July 2016 in the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology's registry of regional development agencies, RRA Zasavje has been the leading institution for regional development in the Zasavje development region during the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 programming periods. RRA Zasavje carries out general development tasks, including preparing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the regional development program, the agreement for regional development and regional projects. It also provides expert and technical support to the regional council and the development council of the region and manages the regional development network.

Circular Economy Institute - "The best entry point for your circular journey." We collaborate with various stakeholders in the global space to implement circular economy practices. For seven years, we have been co-chairing the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP) in Brussels. The Zasavje Circular Academy is a unique gem in our portfolio of references.

The Visual Mediator works as a bridge between complex ideas and audiences, using visual tools to clarify, present, and interpret information. Through graphic recording of discussions and visual facilitation of processes, The Visual Mediator supports getting all stakeholders to speak one voice, making it possible to create a joint vision of the future that all stakeholders are committed to.

Ta brošura in projekt, predstavljen v njej, sta **sofinancirana s strani Evropske unije**.

This brochure and the project presented in it, are **co-funded by the European Union**.

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NIZOZEMSKA – OBISKANE ORGANIZACIJE THE NETHERLANDS – ORGANIZATIONS VISITED

AKTIVNO SODELOVANJE S PREDSTAVNICAMI IN PREDSTAVNIKMI ORGANIZACIJ ACTIVE COLLABORATION WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM ORGANIZATIONS

UDELEŽENCI KROŽNE AKADEMIJE ZASAVJA PARTICIPANTS OF THE ZASAVJE CIRCULAR ACADEMY

SPREMEMBE KOT INVESTICIJA V STABILNO IN NAVDIHUJOČO PRIHODNOST

Mehanizem za pravični prehod podpira območja, ki se zaradi prehoda na podnebno neutralnost soočajo z velikimi družbeno-gospodarskimi izzivi. Spodbuja izvajanje evropskega zelenega dogovora, ki ima za cilj je podnebno neutralno EU do leta 2050.

Zasavska regija je evropska premogovna regija, ki je upravičena do sredstev Sklada za pravični prehod in eden od ciljev Krožne akademije Zasavja je bil, da z novo pridobljenimi znanji in povezovanjem obstoječih izkušenj, ta sredstva postanejo investicija v prihodnost regije.

Pri snovanju Krožne akademije Zasavja smo sledili viziji ustvarjanja modela krožnega gospodarstva, ki temelji na pravičnosti in vključevanju vseh prebivalcev regije.

Naš fokus:

- Prehod k trajnostnemu gospodarjenju z viri in oblikovanje krožnih poslovnih modelov
- Povečanje vključevanja in zaposlovanja mladih in ostalih ranljivih skupin ter medgeneracijsko povezovanje
- Krepitev konkurenčnosti in odpornosti lokalnih podjetij ter spodbujanje zelenih, krožnih inovacij
- Motiviranje za vseživljensko učenje in soustvarjanje novih znanj in poslovnih priložnosti
- Spodbujanje kulture sodelovanja, vključevanja, povezovanja (in praznovanja uspehov)

Zato, da v program pravičnega prehoda vključimo načela krožnosti, je ključno razumevanje krožnega gospodarstva kot modela, ki presega zgolj reciklažo in posvečanje reševanju vprašanja odpadkov. Celoten transformacijski proces smo utelejili na tako imenovanem »modelu metulja« Fundacije Ellen MacArthur, ki ponazarja celovitost krožnega koncepta. Če pri tradicionalnem linearinem modelu gospodarjenja velja pravilo »vzemi – uporabi – zavriši«, v krožnem modelu pri tehnološkem delu zasledujemo princip ohranjanja vrednosti virov v ciklu proizvodnje in uporabe, pri biološkem pa je cilj vračanje bioloških materialov v biosfero in ohranjanje oz. še bolje, regeneracija naravnega okolja.

CHANGE AS AN INVESTMENT INTO A STABLE AND INSPIRING FUTURE

The Just Transition Mechanism supports areas facing significant socio-economic challenges due to the shift to climate neutrality. It promotes the European Green Deal's goal of a climate-neutral EU by 2050.

The Zasavje region, a European coal mining area, is eligible for Just Transition Fund support. One of the goals of the Zasavje Circular Academy was to turn these funds into an investment in the region's future by combining newly acquired knowledge with existing experiences.

When designing the Zasavje Circular Academy, we followed the vision of creating a circular economy model based on fairness and inclusion of all regional residents.

Our focus is on:

- Transitioning to sustainable resource management and designing circular business models
- Increasing inclusion and employment among youth and vulnerable groups, as well as fostering intergenerational connections
- Enhancing the competitiveness and resilience of local businesses, and promoting green and circular innovations
- Motivating lifelong learning and co-creating new knowledge and business opportunities
- Encouraging a culture of collaboration, inclusion, connection, and celebrating achievements

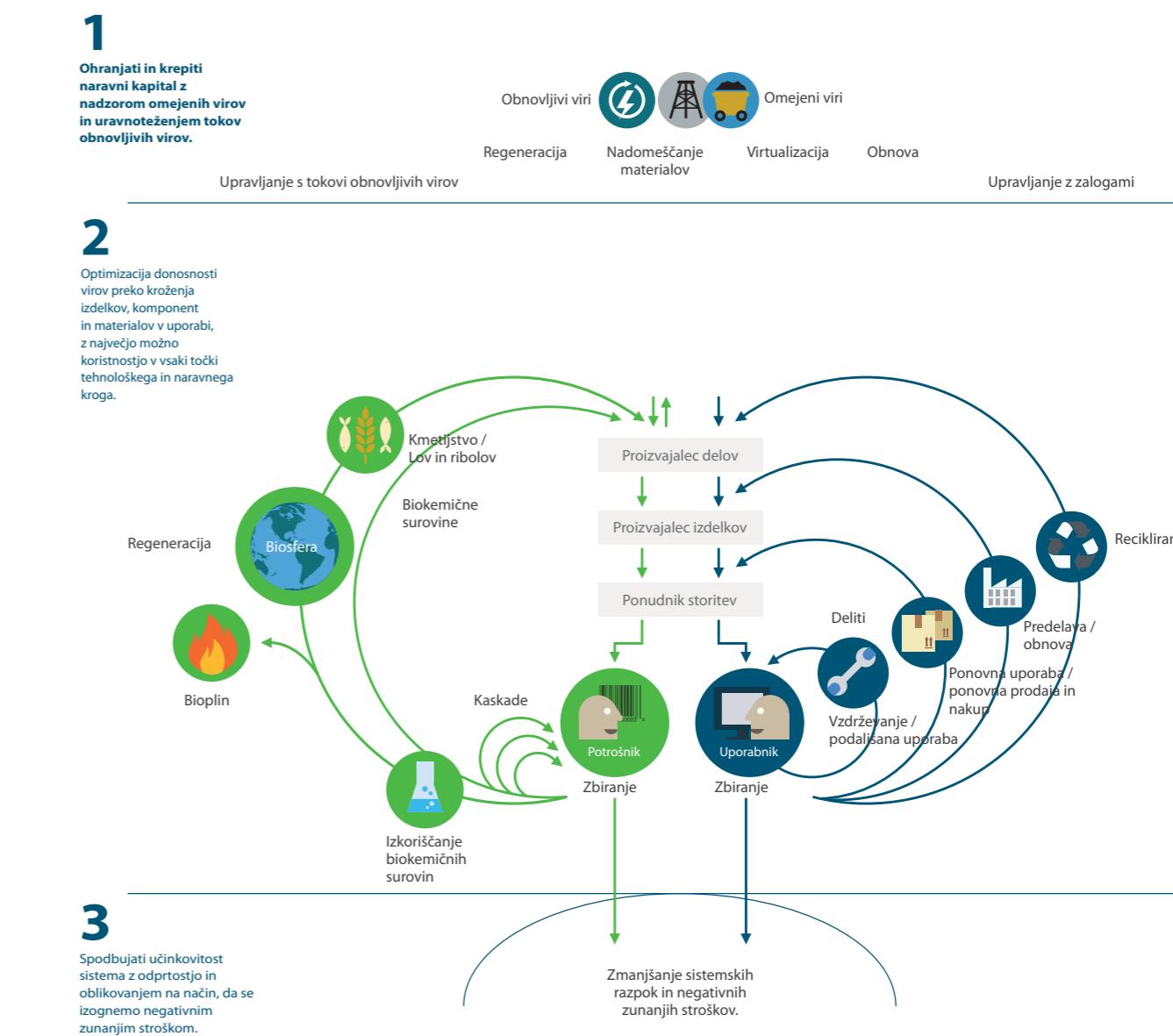
Our approach views the circular economy as more than recycling and waste management. The entire transformation process is based on the so-called "butterfly model" of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, which illustrates the completeness of the circular concept. While the traditional linear economic model follows the "take – use – dispose" rule, the circular model, in the technological domain, aims to preserve resource value throughout production and usage cycles. In the biological domain, the goal is to return biological materials to the biosphere and preserve or, better yet, regenerate the natural environment.

Vodilo pri našem transformacijskem procesu je bilo iskati presečišča in priložnosti med pravičnim prehodom in možnostjo integracije krožnih principov. Še vedno krožno gospodarstvo prepogosto povezujemo izključno z odpadki in reciklažo. Zato smo na koncept pogledali celostno in uporabili tudi tako imenovano lestvico 9 R. Najbolj zaželene prakse so tiste, ki so najviše na lestvici zavrnji in zmanjšaj. Reciklaža in pridobivanje energije iz odpadkov pa sta na zadnjih dveh mestih.

Pri uvajanju krožnih rešitev upoštevamo, da so te lokacijsko in cenovno dostopne. Spodbujajo ustvarjalnost, inovativnost, soustvarjanje, vključujejo tako digitalizacijo kot ročne spretnosti, predvsem pa prispevajo h krepiti kakovosti bivanja za vse.

Our guiding principle during the transformation process was to find opportunities and intersections between the Just Transition and the integration of circular principles. Circular economy is still too often exclusively associated with waste and recycling. Therefore, we adopted a holistic approach, using the 9 R framework, prioritizing practices like refuse and reduce at the top, with recycling and energy recovery at the bottom.

When implementing circular solutions, we ensure they are both locally and economically accessible, fostering creativity, innovation, co-creation. These solutions integrate both digital and manual skills, all while enhancing the quality of life for everyone.



CELOVIT PRIKAZ KROŽNEGA GOSPODARSTVA (ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION, 2013)

1

Preserve and enhance natural capital by controlling finite stocks and balancing renewable resource flows
ReSOLVE levers: regenerate, virtualise, exchange

Renewables  Finite materials 

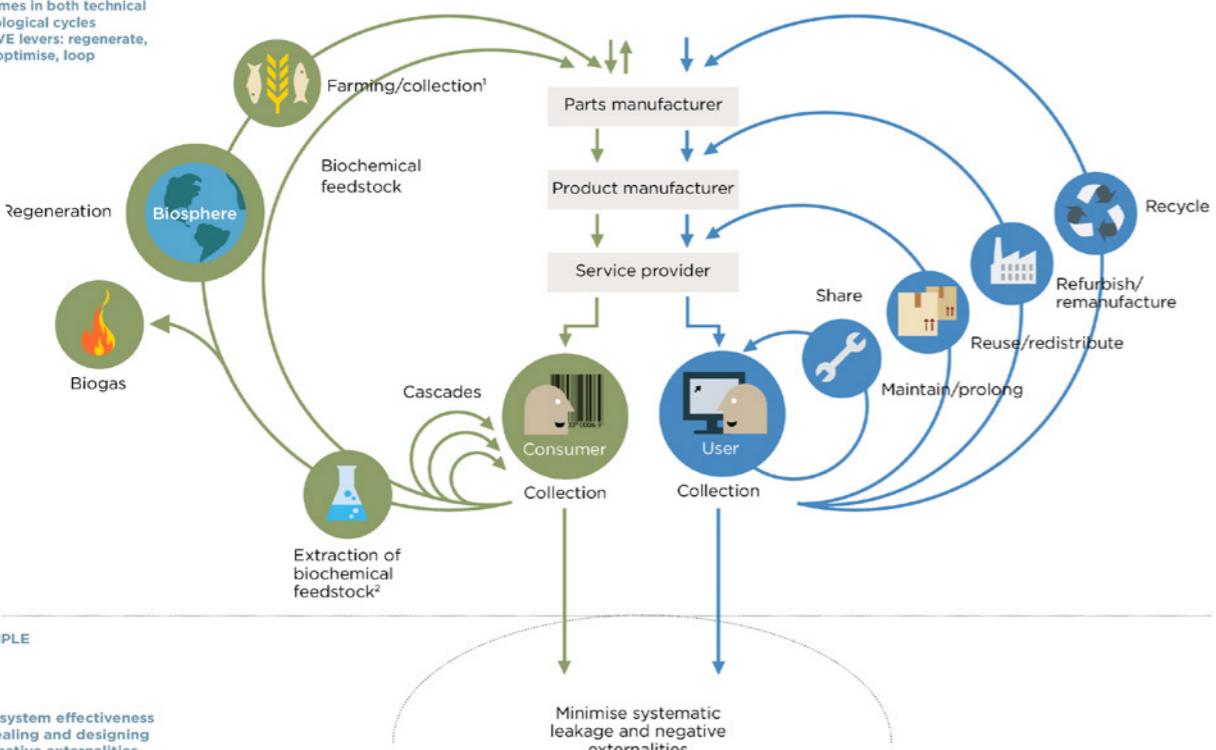
Regenerate Substitute materials Virtualise Restore

Renewables flow management

Stock management

PRINCIPLE 2

Optimise resource yields by circulating products, components and materials in use at the highest utility at all times in both technical and biological cycles
ReSOLVE levers: regenerate, share, optimise, loop



PRINCIPLE 3

Foster system effectiveness by revealing and designing out negative externalities All ReSOLVE levers

OUTLINE OF A CIRCULAR ECONOMY (ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION, 2013)

KLJUČNA LEKCIJA

Rezultat Krožne akademije Zasavje ni le še ena pobuda na papirju. Skupaj smo uspeli ustvariti konkretno temelje za trajnostno prihodnost, kjer je vsaka vložena ura sodelujočih in vsak evro razumljen kot odgovorna investicija v dolgoročen in trajnostni razvoj, konkurenčnost ter odpornost regije. Zasavje naj postane še privlačnejše tako za prebivalce kot za tiste, ki bodo v regiji prepoznali nove priložnosti za uresničevanje svojih kariernih ali osebnih ciljev in sanj.



KEY LESSONS

The result of the Zasavje Circular Academy is not just another initiative on paper. Together, we have successfully laid concrete foundations for a sustainable future, where every participant's effort and every euro spent is seen as a responsible investment in the region's long-term and sustainable development, competitiveness, and resilience. Our vision is to make Zasavje become even more attractive, both for its residents and for those who will recognize new opportunities in the region to pursue their personal or professional.

GRADNIKI KROŽNE AKADEMIJE

Če si ne znamo zamišljati prihodnosti, v kakršni želimo živeti, je tudi ne moremo ustvariti. Zato je Krožna akademija Zasavja celoten proces sodelovanja gradila na spodbujanju in opolnomočenju deležnikov, da so v svojih izkušnjah, znanju in ambicijah sami prepoznali potenciale za postavitev Zasavske regije na evropski zemljevid v vlogi svetilnika zelenega krožnega prehoda.

Namen akademije je bil prepoznati in povezati deležnike, ki skupaj lahko udejanjijo konkretnе krožne projekte, utrdijo konkurenčnost in odpornost Zasavske regije ter prispevajo k dobremu življenju za vse. Oblikovati smo želeli vsebine, ki so primerne za Zasavje, hkrati pa zasnova in proces akademije omogočajo, da se znanje in izkušnje prenesejo tudi v druga okolja. Akademija na ta način postane okvir za udejanjanje pravičnega in krožnega prehoda v različnih slovenskih in evropskih regijah, ki se soočajo s sorodnimi izvivi kot Zasavje in so vključene v Mechanizem za pravični prehod. Spodbuja prehod iz tradicionalne premogovne v visokotehnološko in nizkoogljično regijo.

Metodologija akademije:

Soustvarjanje znanja za vzpostavitev krožnih poslovnih modelov in kompetentne mreže strokovnjakov je bilo vodilo celotnega programa. Posamezni 4x4urni moduli so zato zasnovani izrazito participativno. Nositci vsebin predstavijo osnovni strokovni okvir, nato pa se v različnih interaktivnih oblikah udeleženci vključujejo v sooblikovanje novih, času in prostoru prilagojenih krožnih rešitev.

Spodbujanje ustvarjalnega in kritičnega mišljenja, ustvarjanje varnega prostora za enakovredno vključevanje različnih deležnikov in fokusirana razprava, usmerjena v konstruktivne rešitve, so narekovali item sodelovanja. Ob začetku akademije smo podali pobudo, da so udeleženci prisotni v vseh 4 modulih, da bi lahko zagotovili vzpostavitev mreže kompetenc in nosilcev odločitev, ki presegajo čas trajanja akademije in zagotavljajo implementacijo rezultatov na daljši rok. Sestavni del programa je bilo tudi mentorstvo, ki smo ga izvedli na podlagi prepoznavnih potreb udeležencev v živo oz. online. Pomemben del zasnove akademije je predstavljal strokona ekskurzija na Nizozemsko, ki smo jo izvedli pred začetkom izvajanja izobraževalnih modulov in na ta

PILARS OF THE CIRCULAR ACADEMY

If we cannot imagine the future we want to live in, we cannot create it. Therefore, the Zasavje Circular Academy built the entire collaboration process on empowering stakeholders to recognize through their own experiences, knowledge and ambitions, the potential to position the Zasavje region on the European map as a beacon of green circular transition.

The purpose of the academy was to identify and connect stakeholders who can implement concrete circular projects, strengthen the competitiveness and resilience of the Zasavje region, and contribute to a better life for all. We aimed to develop content tailored to Zasavje, while the design and process of the academy also allow the knowledge and experiences to be transferred to other environments. In this way, the academy becomes a framework for implementing a just and circular transition in various Slovenian and European regions facing similar challenges as Zasavje and are included in the Just Transition Mechanism. It promotes the transition from a traditional coal region to a high-tech, low-carbon one.

Academy Methodology:

Co-creating knowledge to establish circular business models and a competent network of professionals was the guiding principle of the entire program. Each 4x4-hour module was designed in a highly participatory way. Content leaders presented the basic professional framework, and then participants were involved in co-designing new circular solutions adapted to time and place in various interactive forms.

This participatory format encouraged creative and critical thinking, creating collaboration among diverse stakeholders, aimed at constructive solutions. At the beginning of the academy, we initiated the idea that participants should attend all 4 modules to ensure the establishment of a network of competencies and decision-makers that extends beyond the academy's duration and guarantees long-term implementation of the results. A key part of the program was also mentorship, which we conducted based on the recognized needs of participants either in person or online. An important element of the academy's design was the professional excursion to the

način dobili odličen vpogled v različne modele krožnega gospodarstva, ki jih izvajajo nizozemski kolegi, pridobili nova znanja in informacije, predstavili tudi dobre prakse Zasavja in stekali vezi za nova mednarodna poslovna sodelovanja.

Z Regionalno konferenco Pravičnega prehoda Zasavja v organizaciji RRA Zasavje smo zaokrožili proces akademije, javno predstavili vsebino in rezultate našega soustvarjanja ter povabili k sodelovanju širšo javnost. Udeležba delegacije iz ukrajinskega mesta Sheptytskyi (prej Červonograd), ki si je ogledala izbrane projekte Pravičnega Prehoda Zasavja in dobre prakse regijske tranzicije je

Netherlands, conducted prior to the educational modules. This excursion provided an excellent insight into various circular economy models carried out by Dutch colleagues, gained new knowledge and information, presented the best practices of Zasavje, and forged connections for new international business collaborations.

With **the Regional Just Transition Conference in Zasavje**, organized by the Zasavje Regional Development Agency, we completed the academy process, publicly presented the content and results of our co-creation, and invited the broader public to join in. The participation of a delegation from the Ukrainian city of Sheptytskyi

CILJI PROGRAMA



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- **Poglobiti razumevanje koncepta krožnega gospodarstva ter identificirati priložnosti za udejanjanje krožnih modelov, s poudarkom na Zasavju in potencialih, ki se izrisujejo.**
- **Zasnovati prve (pilotne) preobrazbene projekte**, ki temeljijo na načelih krožnega gospodarstva in uvajajo krožne poslovne modele tako, da posamezniki v okviru akademije pridobijo specifična strokovna znanja in obenem v proces vključijo svoja znanja in izkušnje.
- **Vključiti nosilce krožnih sprememb v Zasavju**, ki že prispevajo ali pa bodo v naslednjih letih pomembno prispevali h krožni transformaciji regije (podjetja, občine, akademske institucije, kulturno umetniška središča, nosilci turistične dejavnosti, mediji...).
- **Spozнатi referenčne krožne prakse izven Zasavja**, predstavitev dobrih praks v Slovenskem in mednarodnem prostoru in priložnost za izmenjavo izkušenj ter mreženje.
- **Vzpostaviti okolje za učinkovito povezovanje**, v katerem ob strokovni podpori in mentorstvu udeleženci okrepijo svoje kompetence s področja krožnega gospodarstva in vzpostavijo mrežo, ki bo sposobna suvereno sodelovati v procesu pravičnega prehoda Zasavja.
- **Pripraviti izhodišča za pilotni projekt** z največjim potencialom za kandidaturo na evropskih razpisih na temo krožnega gospodarstva.
- **Dodana vrednost – vizualna facilitacija** – v vseh modulih akademije je bila prisotna vizualna facilitatorka, ki je spremljala proces razvoja idej v projekte in vizualizirala ključna sporočila.

- **Deepen the understanding of the circular economy concept and identify opportunities for implementing circular models**, with a focus on Zasavje and its emerging potential.
- **Develop initial (pilot) transformative projects** based on circular economy principles and business models, enabling participants in the academy to acquire specific expertise while integrating their own knowledge and experience into the process.
- **Involve key stakeholders of circular change in Zasavje**, those who are already contributing or will significantly contribute in the coming years to the region's circular transformation (businesses, municipalities, academic institutions, cultural and artistic centers, tourism operators, media, etc.).
- **Learn about reference circular practices from outside Zasavje**, present best practices from Slovenia and internationally, and provide opportunities for exchanging experiences and networking.
- **Create an environment for effective networking**, supported by expert guidance and mentorship, to strengthen participants' competencies in circular economy and establish a network capable of confidently participating in the Just Transition process in Zasavje.
- **Prepare the foundation for a pilot project** with the greatest potential for applying for European grants on the topic of circular economy.
- **Added value – visual facilitation:** All academy modules featured a visual facilitator who presented the development of ideas and visualized key messages.

izrazila navdušenje nad akademijo in prepoznała priložnosti za uporabo predstavljene metodologije. Predstavnik **Sekretariata za premogovne regije EU v prehodu**, ki je ob zaključku konference sodelovali v razpravah in z udeleženci akademije, je spodbudil predstavitev akademije kot dobre prakse, ki jo velja posnemati tudi v okviru procesa Pravičnega prehoda v Evropi.

Kako naprej? RRA Zasavje bo nadaljevala s podporo trem predstavljenim projektom, pričujoča brošura naj spodbudi učinkovitejšo diseminacijo znanja, ki smo ga soustvarili, v pripravi pa je že naslednja etapa akademije kot tudi vzpostavljanje novih mednarodnih povezovanj in sodelovanj.

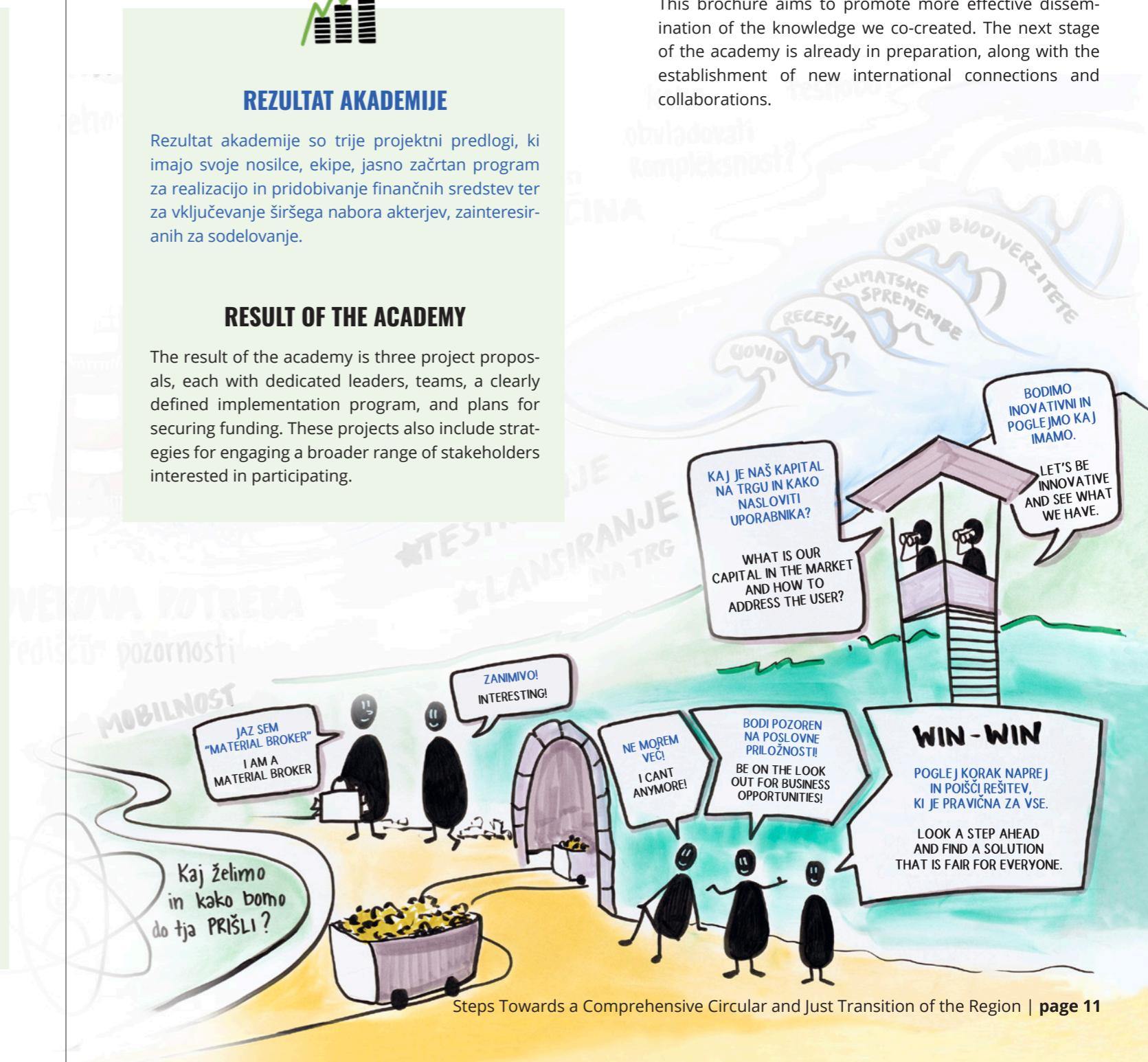


REZULTAT AKADEMIE

Rezultat akademije so trije projektni predlogi, ki imajo svoje nosilce, ekipe, jasno začrtan program za realizacijo in pridobivanje finančnih sredstev ter za vključevanje širšega nabora akterjev, zainteresiranih za sodelovanje.

RESULT OF THE ACADEMY

The result of the academy is three project proposals, each with dedicated leaders, teams, a clearly defined implementation program, and plans for securing funding. These projects also include strategies for engaging a broader range of stakeholders interested in participating.



(formerly Chervonograd), who visited selected Just Transition projects, marked an important step in expanding international cooperation. The delegation expressed their enthusiasm for the academy and recognized the potential for applying the presented methodology in their own regions.

A representative from the **EU Coal Regions in Transition Secretariat**, who also participated in the discussions and engaged with the academy participants, encouraged the academy's presentation as a best practice to be replicated within the broader Just Transition process across Europe.

What's next? The Zasavje Regional Development Agency will continue to support the three presented projects. This brochure aims to promote more effective dissemination of the knowledge we co-created. The next stage of the academy is already in preparation, along with the establishment of new international connections and collaborations.

KORAKI NA POTI

1 ZASNOVA AKADEMIJE

Uskladitev pričakovanj in ciljev med RRA Zasavje – Center za pravični prehod Zasavje in Circular Change – Institutom za krožno gospodarstvo. Prepozna priložnost za vključitev krožnega gospodarstva v razvojne aktivnosti, ki usmerjajo regionalni krožni prehod in oris procesa sodelovanja.



3 MODUL 1

Zasavje pilotna krožna regija - krožno gospodarstvo kot vezivo skupnosti in regionalne konkurenčnosti. Osvežitev osnov krožnega gospodarstva, pomena sistemskega pristopa in raznolikosti krožnih poslovnih modelov. Povzetki strokovne ekskurzije in potencial za prenos izbranih krožnih praks v Zasavje.

2 STROKOVNA ESKURZIJA

Nizozemska je izbrana kot država, ki ima odlične prakse na področju krožnega gospodarstva in predstavlja inspiracijo za Zasavje. Program in izvedba ekskurzije, ogled izbranih dobrih praks, vzpostavitev stikov s strokovnjaki. Obisk veleposlanstva Slovenije na Nizozemskem in nizozemskega veleposlanstva ob vrnitvi v Slovenijo.

4 MODUL 2

Od pilota do »EU kandidata« - modeliranje izbranega krožnega potenciala in zasnova krožnega ekosistema Zasavje. Pregled nabora projektov, potencialov, verig vrednosti, mapiranih v 1. modulu, evalvacija in izbor projektov z največjim potencialom za realizacijo.

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6 MODUL 4

Krožna mreža Zasavja – sistemski umestitev predloga v celovito krožno & pravično transformacijo regije. Oris ključnih deležnikov krožnega ekosistema Zasavja in oblikovanje nabora vodil za odločevalce ter umeščanje izoblikovanih treh pilotnih projektov. Smernice za nadaljevanje zastavljenega krožnega trasformacijskega procesa regije.

8 KONFERENCA

Regionalna konferenca Pravičnega prehoda Zasavja – predstavitev celotnega programa akademije in rezultatov. Prva priložnost za javno predstavitev v okviru akademije oblikovanih projektov različnim deležnikom – znotraj regije, nacionalno in mednarodno. Mreženje ter navezovanje novih poslovnih stikov. Medijska izpostavljenost in prepoznavnost.

9 ZASNOVA BROŠURE

Vsebinska in kreativna zasnova publikacije, ki povzema metodologijo akademije, ključne gradnike in deležnike, predstavi rezultate in nadaljnje korake. Element diseminacije pridobljenih znanj in izkušenj v okviru Zasavja, ki naj bo uporabno vodilo za ostale regije za njihov krožni in pravični prehod.

10 PRIPRAVA NOVIH MODULOV

Na podlagi prvega ciklusa akademije, rezultatov in ambicij za njihovo implementacijo in nadgradnjo, je v pripravi drugi ciklus akademije kot tudi širitev modela akademije v druge zainteresirane regije, ki si želijo pravični prehod nadgraditi z načeli krožnosti in oblikovati svoje regionalne projekte.

STEPS ON THE JOURNEY

1 ACADEMY CONCEPT

Aligning expectations and goals between the Regional Development Agency Zasavje – Center for Just Transition Zasavje and Circular Change – Institute for Circular Economy. Recognizing the opportunity to integrate circular economy into development activities guiding the regional circular transition, and outlining the collaboration process.



2 STUDY TRIP

The Netherlands has been selected as a country with excellent circular economy practices, providing inspiration for Zasavje. The program includes visiting selected best practices, establishing contacts with experts, and a visit to the Slovenian Embassy in the Netherlands and the Dutch Embassy upon returning to Slovenia.

3 MODULE 1

Zasavje as a Pilot Circular Region – Circular Economy as the Bond for Community and Regional Competitiveness. A refresher on the fundamentals of circular economy, the importance of a systems approach, and the diversity of circular business models. A summary of the professional excursion and the potential for transferring selected circular practices to Zasavje.

4 MODULE 2

From Pilot to “EU Candidate” – Modeling the Chosen Circular Potential and Designing Zasavje’s Circular Ecosystem. Review of the project selection, potential, and value chains mapped in Module 1, evaluation, and selection of projects with the highest potential for realization.

5 MODULE 3

Focus on Presenting the “EU Candidate” – Finalizing the proposal with regional decision-makers, using SWOT analysis for selected projects, and preparing for the “pitch.” Understanding the systemic planning of the circular transition and considering guidelines when designing the region’s circular ecosystem.



6 MODULE 4

The Circular Network of Zasavje – Systemic Integration of the Proposal into a Comprehensive Circular & Just Transformation of the Region. Mapping key stakeholders in Zasavje’s circular ecosystem, creating a set of guidelines for decision-makers, and placing the three pilot projects in context. Guidelines for continuing the established circular transformation process in the region.

7 MENTORING

Mentoring aimed at empowering team members within selected projects to successfully present their ideas (the “pitch”) to interested stakeholders, identify potential partners in local and international environments, establish business connections, and access the most appropriate funding sources.

8 CONFERENCE

Zasavje Just Transition Regional Conference – Presenting the entire academy program and results. The first opportunity for a public presentation of the projects developed within the academy to various stakeholders within the region, nationally, and internationally. Networking and forming new business contacts. Media exposure and increased visibility.

9 BROCHURE CONCEPT

Designing the publication’s content and creative aspects, summarizing the academy’s methodology, key components and stakeholders, presenting results, and next steps. A tool for disseminating the knowledge and experiences gained within Zasavje, intended to serve as a practical guide for other regions undergoing their own circular and just transition.

10 PREPARATION OF NEW MODULES

Based on the first cycle of the academy, its results, and the ambitions for their implementation and expansion, the second cycle of the academy is being prepared. Additionally, the expansion of the academy model to other interested regions is underway, aiming to enrich their just transition with the principles of circularity and to develop their own regional projects.

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Pri zasnovi akademije smo upoštevali sistemski pristop. Vključiti, povezati in preplesti smo želeli različna področja in preseči običajni »silošni« pristop. K temu vodilu smo se v procesu Krožne akademije Zasavja vsakokrat znova vračali, ko smo preverjali ustreznost izbranih korakov in smernic.

Nismo si dopustili, da bi nas zaneslo navdušenje nad eno samo rešitvijo, raje smo jo postavili v kontekst pozitivnih in negativnih vplivov, ki jih prinaša ter jo preverili iz različnih zornih kotov – upoštevajoč ekonomsko, družbeno in okoljsko razsežnost. Zato so tudi projekti, ki so rezultat akademije, celostni, kompleksni in vpeti v regionalni sistem Zasavje. Vključujejo različne deležnike, različne panoge, podjetja, organizacije, nagovarjajo različne izzive in ponujajo nabor rešitev, ki se glede na kontekst, v katerega jih umestimo, prilagajajo in povezujejo z ostalimi elementi regionalnega eko-sistema.

V Zasavju smo z akademijo ustvarili proces, ki je prinesel rezultate, zaradi katerih verjamemo, da smo lahko navdih tudi za druge regije, ki se šele podajajo na pot pravičnega prehoda. Naša izkušnja kaže, da vključevanje krožnega gospodarstva ni zgolj »trendovski preblisk«, temveč ključna strateška izbira, ki omogoča, da so vsi viri - finančni, človeški in materialni—uporabljeni premišljeno in učinkovito.

2 STROKOVNA EKSURZIJA STUDY TRIP

Ogled obstoječih dobrih praks s področja krožnega gospodarstva in možnost osebnega pogovora z nosilci sprememb razpira povsem drugačno možnost razumevanja in oblikovanja lastnih krožnih rešitev kot zgolj teoretični študij primerov.

Štiri dnevna strokovna ekskurzija na Nizozemsko je predstavnikom Zasavje omogočila povezovanje z nizozemskimi podjetji in sočasno predstavitev lastnih praks in znanj. Vzpostavile so se nove poslovne priložnosti, utrdile osebne vezi in zarisali potenciali za sodelovanje v prihodnosti. Obisk je podal vpogled v nekatere nove poklice kot je na primer »material broker«, ki so ga uvedli na nizozemskih železnicah. Inovacijsko območje (poslovni peskovnik) Green Village v Delftu je bil navdih za pobudo slovenskim odločevalcem na ministrstvu za gospodarstvo,

In the design of the academy, we adopted a systemic approach. We aimed to integrate, connect, and intertwine various fields, breaking away from the usual "silo" approach. This guiding principle remained our focus throughout the a circular maturity assessment calculator Zasavje Circular Academy process, whenever we reviewed the relevance of our chosen steps and directions.

We did not allow ourselves to be swept away by the excitement of a single solution. Instead, we evaluated each option within the context of its positive and negative impacts, considering economic, social, and environmental dimensions. As a result, the projects stemming from the academy are holistic, complex, and embedded within the regional system of Zasavje. They involve various stakeholders, industries, businesses, and organizations, addressing diverse challenges and offering adaptable solutions that connect with other elements of the regional ecosystem.

Through the Circular Economy Academy, we have created a process in Zasavje that has yielded results, making us believe that we can serve as an inspiration for other regions that are just beginning their journey towards a just transition. Our experience shows that the integration of circular economy principles is not merely a "trendy insight," but a critical strategic choice that ensures the thoughtful and efficient use of all resources—financial, human, and material.

Exploring existing best practices in the circular economy and engaging directly with change-makers provide a much deeper understanding of circular solutions than theoretical case studies alone.

The professional study trip to the Netherlands allowed Zasavje representatives to connect with Dutch companies while also showcasing their own practices and knowledge. New business opportunities were established, personal connections strengthened, and potential future collaborations were outlined. The visit provided insight into emerging professions, such as the "material broker" introduced by Dutch railways. The innovation hub (business sandbox) Green Village in Delft inspired a proposal to Slovenian decision-makers at the Ministry of Economy to support a similar project in Zasavje. Additionally, the

da bi podprli sorodni projekt v Zasavju. Digitalno orodje – Route Circulair – kalkulator za oceno krožne zrelosti podjetja – pa je na primer navdušil predstavnike obrtne cone iz Zasavje, da bi med podjetji izvedli evalvacijo s pomočjo tega orodja.

Sprejem delegacije na slovenskem veleposlaništvu v Haagu in ob vrtniti na nizozemskem veleposlaništvo v Ljubljani pa je strokovni ekskurziji dodal še diplomatsko noto. Pogovor z obema veleposlanikoma je okreplil že tradicionalno dobro sodelovanje na področju krožnega gospodarstva med državama.

digital tool Route Circulair—a circular maturity assessment calculator—captivated representatives from the Zasavje industrial zone, leading to discussions about using it to evaluate local businesses.

The reception of the delegation at the Slovenian Embassy in The Hague and, upon returning, at the Dutch Embassy in Ljubljana, added a diplomatic dimension to the study trip. Conversations with both ambassadors reinforced the strong cooperation between the two countries in the field of circular economy.



3
MODUL 1
MODULE 1

DELAVNICA 1

ZASAVJE PILOTNA KROŽNA REGIJA

- KROŽNO GOSPODARSTVO KOT VEZIVO SKUPNOSTI IN REGIONALNE KONKURENČNOSTI

WORKSHOP 1

ZASAVJE PILOT CIRCULAR REGION

- CIRCULAR ECONOMY AS A BINDER FOR COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS



Razumevanje polikrise, ki smo ji priča (klimatske spremembe, izguba biotske raznovrstnosti, pandemije, vojne, migracije...) ter vpogled v dogajanje na področju zelenega prehoda in krožnega gospodarstva v arenih EU sta dva predpogoja za odgovorno sprejemanje odločitev na ravni regije.

Delavnico smo otvorili s kratko predstavljivo globalnih trendov in odzivov nanje na ravni EU. Vživelj smo se tudi v stiske posameznika, ki je vse bolj podvržen novim oblikam tesnobe – klimatska anksioznost. Kompleksnost izzivov kliče po sistemskem pristopu. Medsebojna soodvisnost in prepletjenost različnih tematik, področij, vsebin ne omogoča več parcialnega naslavljanja problemov, temveč moramo nanje gledati z različnih zornih kotov in se jih lotevati celostno.

Osvežili smo razumevanje Ciljev trajnostnega razvoja, ki podpirajo kakovostno življenje vseh in nas spodbujajo k ravnjanjem, ki vključujejo vsakogar. Evropski zeleni dogovor, Akcijski načrt za krožno gospodarstvo, Fit for 55, ESG, taksonomija... Na ravni EU imamo vsebine, smernice in regulatorne predpise, ki nas usmerjajo k delovanju, ki upošteva okoljsko, družbeno in ekonomsko razsežnost. Umetna inteligenca in digitalizacija sta prav tako podpora pri oblikovanju novih rešitev in procesov v smeri zelenega, trajnostnega, krožnega.

Pregledali smo različne poslovne modele, ki sledijo načelom krožnosti – od podaljševanja življenjske dobe izdelkom, pa do prehoda od produktov do storitev. Krožno gospodarsvo smo postavili v kontekst krepitve odpornosti in konkurenčnosti podjetij. Predstavljeni teoretični poslovni modeli smo podkrepili tudi s primeri iz prakse in ob tem razvili diskusijo z udeleženci delavnice.

Prvo srečanje je bilo ključno za vzpostavitev povezosti in zaupanja znotraj skupine udeležencev. Čeprav večina živi in deluje v Zasavju, se nekateri med seboj niso poznali, ali pa niso vedeli, s čim se ukvarjajo njihovi kolegi in kaj so njihovi poslovni izzivi.

Vedno znova se izkaže, kako pomembno je, da se fizično srečamo, da si vzamemo čas za predstavitev in da se

PREBLISK

Vsek od udeležencev delavnice je zapisal, v katero od podjetij oz. organizacij v regiji bi vložil svoj fiktivni finančni kapital. Na ta način smo dobili pregled zaupanja vrednih in za vlaganja atraktivnih organizacij v regiji.



INSIGHT

Each workshop participant identified a company or organization in the region where they would hypothetically invest their fictional financial capital. This exercise provided an overview of the most trusted and investment-attractive organizations in the region.

Understanding the polycrisis we face today—climate change, biodiversity loss, pandemics, wars, migrations, and more—alongside developments in the EU's green transition and circular economy, forms a foundation for making responsible decisions at the regional level.

We began the workshop with a brief overview of global trends and the EU's responses, highlighting how these dynamics influence individuals and communities. Discussions addressed the emotional burden of issues like climate anxiety, highlighting the human dimension of these crises. The complexity of these challenges calls for systemic approaches: the interconnectedness of topics, sectors, and fields no longer allow for isolated problem-solving but demand holistic, multi-dimensional perspectives.

Participants revisited the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework for inclusive actions that support quality of life for all. We also discussed EU policies and initiatives—such as the European Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action Plan, Fit for 55, ESG standards, and the taxonomy regulation—that provide robust guidelines for environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable practices. Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and digitalization, were highlighted as essential tools for shaping new green, sustainable, and circular solutions.

We examined various circular business models, from extending product lifespans to shifting from product-based to service-based systems. These models were contextualized as pathways to enhancing the resilience and competitiveness of businesses. Theoretical discussions were enriched by practical examples, sparking lively discussions among participants.

The first session was pivotal in fostering connections and trust among the participants. Despite being based in Zasavje, many participants were unfamiliar with each other's work and challenges or had never met before. The value of in-person meetings becomes evident—providing a space for meaningful introductions and attentive listening. Even brief descriptions of organizational activities,

poslušamo. Že iz kratkih opisov dela, uspehov, izzivov posameznih organizacij in podjetij se ob ustreznih orkestracijih rodijo ideje za povezovanja in sodelovanja.

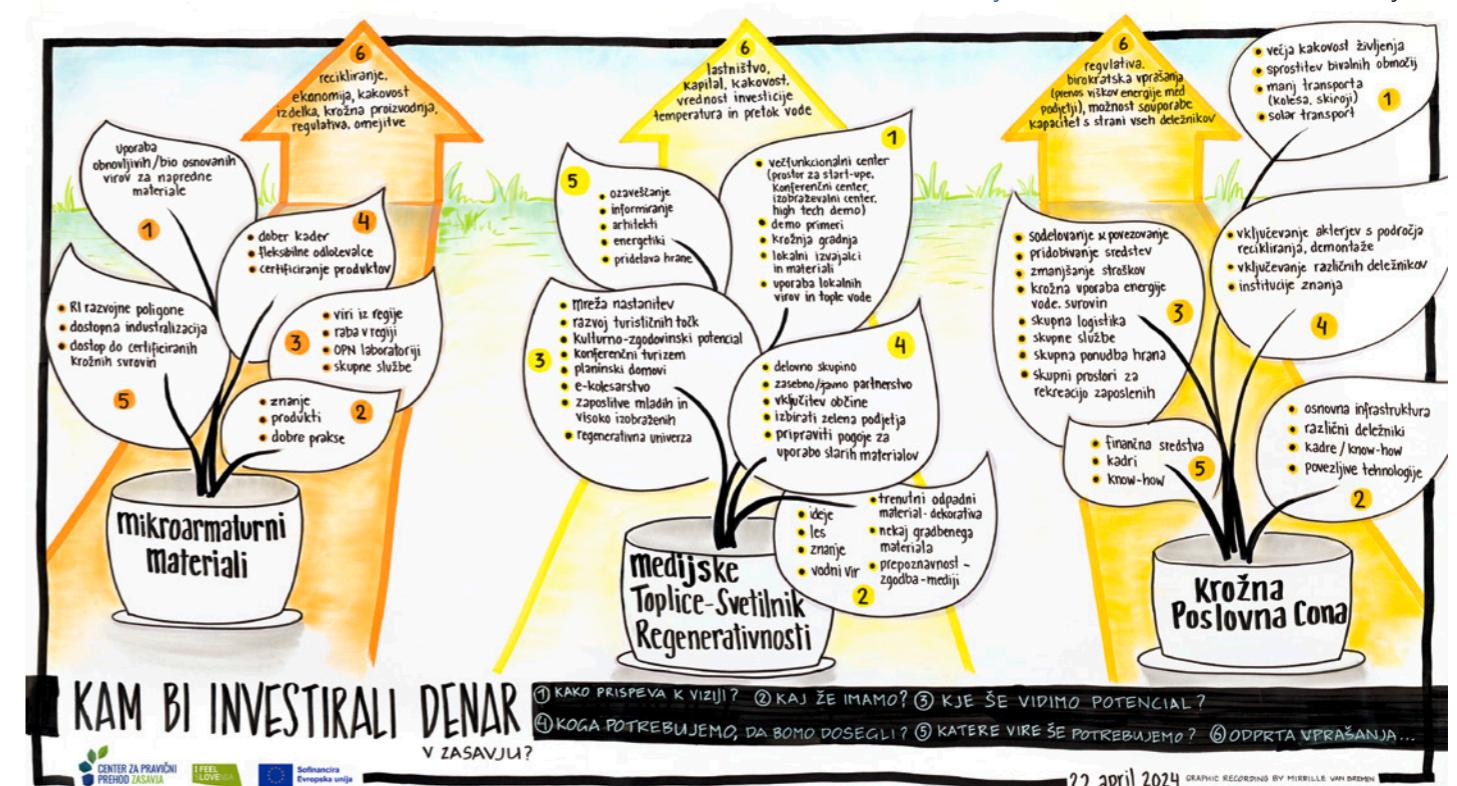
achievements, and challenges revealed opportunities for collaboration, underscoring the value of carefully orchestrated interactions. These moments often lay the groundwork for creative partnerships and shared initiatives.



NEKAJ VSEBIN ZA RAZMISLEK:

- Kaj so potrebe človeštva in kako se bomo preusmerili od zadovljevanja želja, do zadovoljevanja potreb – odgovorna proizvodnja in potrošnja (skladno s Ciljem trajnostnega razvoja 12)
- Vprašanje ni le kako nekaj učinkovito proizvajati, temveč kdaj je nečesa dovolj (premik od učinkovitosti do zadostnosti)
- Kako ločiti razvoj od izkorisčanja naravnih virov (poudarek na krožnih, regenerativnih rešitvah in uporabi sekundarnih, ne primarnih virov)
- Vzpostavljanje novih krožnih sistemov vrednosti (namesto tradicionalnih linearnih verig vrednosti)
- Realnost Evrope - odvisnost od uvoza energentov in surovin nas dela zelo ranljive (poudarek na inovativnosti, novih sistemskih rešitvah)

VIZUALNI POVZETEK PROJEKTOV / VISUAL SUMMARY OF THE PROJECTS



DELAVNICA 2

OD PILOTA DO »EU KANDIDATA«

– MODELIRANJE IZBRANEGA KROŽNEGA POTENCIALA IN ZASNOVA KROŽNEGA EKOSISTEMA

Prehod od idej do konkretnih projektnih predlogov, ki so zreli za prenos v prakso in za pridobivanje finančnih sredstev, zahteva realno presojo potencialov in tveganj. Vključevanje načel krožnosti je dodaten kriterij, ki ga je treba vključiti v projektni načrt.

V prvem modulu zasnovane projektne predloge smo najprej ovrednotili z vidika, kako se vključujejo v skupno vizijo - Zasavje kot mednarodni svetilnik krožnega in pravičnega prehoda. Ali podpirajo vrednote, ki smo jih opredelili kot ključne, ali vsebujejo elemente krožnega gospodarstva, ali so vključujuči in seveda – ali imajo potencial, da zaživijo. Udeležence smo urili v tem, kako argumentirano sodelovati v diskusiji in kako sočasno upoštevati širšo, sistemsko sliko (zoom out) in konkretno priložnost oz. projekt (zoom in).

Udeleženci so v štirih skupinah oblikovali projektne predloge. Vsaka skupina je odgovorila na vprašanje 'Kaj še potrebujemo, da lahko naš projekt uspešno cveti in preživi?' Ker je poudarek tudi na grajenju širšega inovacijskega ekosistema regije, je bilo dodatno vprašanje - 'Kje so možne sinergije med projekti?'. Sistemski pristop je spodbujen zato, ker parcialne rešitve še ne pomenijo nujno koristi oz. blagostanja za celotno regijo. Preverjali smo torej tako razvojni potencial posameznega projekta kot tudi njegovo vpetost in vpliv na širši sistem.

Elementi načrta, ki so ga izpolnjevali udeleženci:

- Imena nosilcev projekta
- Sodelujoče organizacije
- Vključeni deležniki
- Kompetence obstoječih deležnikov
- Časovnica
- Cilji
- Mejniki
- Pričakovani rezultati
- Potrebni viri
- Finančni okvir
- Potreba po mentorski podpori

Ko je vsaka od skupin izpolnila vprašalnik, je sledila rotacija in evalvacija vprašalnika s strani druge skupine. Po treh rotacijah so nosilci projektov na kratko predstavili načrt in naslednje potrebne korake za realizacijo. »Semenja«, ki smo jih zasejali v prvi delavnici, so se razcvetela v tri »cvetlice«:

WORKSHOP 2

FROM PILOT TO "EU CANDIDATE" – MODELING SELECTED CIRCULAR POTENTIAL AND DESIGNING A CIRCULAR ECOSYSTEM

The transition from ideas to tangible project proposals, ready for implementation and securing funding, requires a realistic assessment of both potentials and risks. Integrating circularity principles serves as an additional criterion that must be embedded into project planning.

In the first module, project proposals were evaluated based on their alignment with the shared vision: Zasavje as an international beacon of circular and just transition. The key criteria were whether they supported core values, incorporated circular economy principles, were inclusive, and had the potential for successful implementation. Participants were trained to engage in reasoned discussions, balancing a broader systemic perspective (zoom out) with a focus on specific opportunities (zoom in).

Working in four groups, participants developed project proposals by addressing two questions: 'What do we still need for our project to thrive and succeed?' 'Where can synergies between projects be found?' This systemic approach emphasized the importance of building a broader regional innovation ecosystem, as partial solutions alone may not lead to overall regional prosperity. Projects were assessed for their developmental potential, integration, and impact on the wider system.

Elements of the Plan Completed by Participants:

- Project Leads
- Participating Organizations
- Involved Stakeholders
- Competencies of Existing Stakeholders
- Timeline
- Objectives
- Milestones
- Expected Outcomes
- Required Resources
- Financial Framework
- Need for Mentorship Support

Once each group completed the questionnaire, a rotation followed, allowing another group to evaluate their responses. After three rotations, the project leads briefly presented their plans and outlined the next necessary steps for implementation. The "seeds" planted during the first workshop blossomed into three "flowers":



PROJEKT 1 > **Mikroarmaturni materiali** – bio-osnovani izdelki za prodor na tujje trge



PROJEKT 2 > **Krožna poslovna cona** – povezava treh con v eno večjo, krožno poslovno cono



PROJEKT 3 > **Medijske Toplice** – mrežni turizem v regiji in svelnik regenerativnosti

Dodatevna priložnost: Raziskava potenciala uporabe plinskih emisij na centralni deponij.

Zasnovali smo osnove kažipota za razvoj izbranega krožnega projekta, ki naj bo uporabljen kot pripomoček za komuniciranje projekta zainteresiranim deležnikom kot tudi za izvajanje začrtanih aktivnosti skladno s cilji, časovnico in dogovorjenimi mejniki.



PROJECT 1 > **Micro-armature materials** – bio-based products for foreign market entry



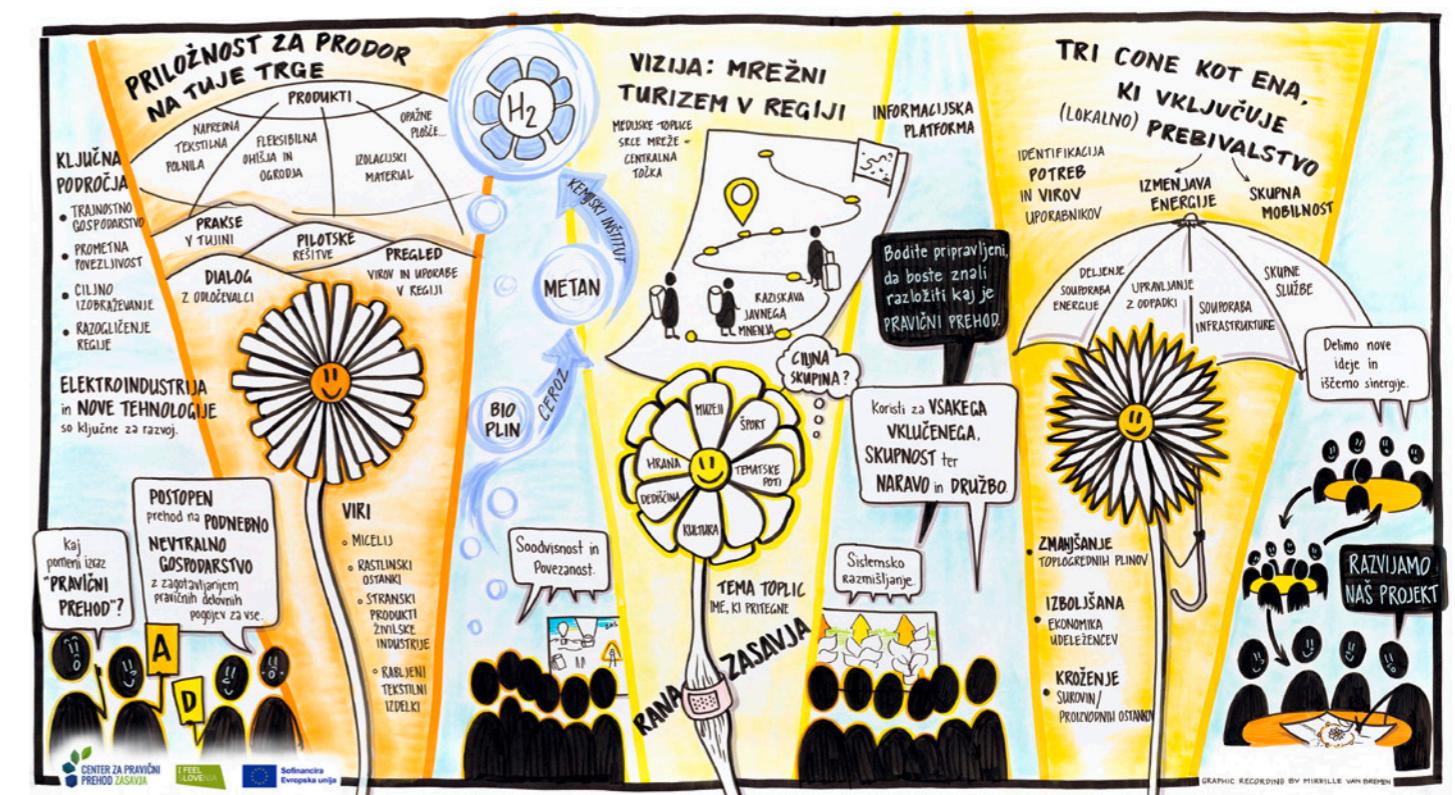
PROJECT 2 > **Circular business zone** – connecting three zones into one larger, circular business zone



PROJECT 3 > **Media Spa** – networked tourism in the region and the beacon of regeneration

Additional opportunity: Research on the potential use of gas emissions at the central landfill.

We have outlined the foundations of a roadmap for the development of the selected circular project, which should be used as a tool for communicating the project to interested stakeholders and for carrying out the planned activities in line with the objectives, timeline, and agreed milestones.



GRAFIČNI POSNETEK DELAVNICE / GRAPHIC RECORDING OF THE WORKSHOP



PREBLISK

Zasavje kot regija, ki je zavezana pravičnemu prehodu, ta prehod lahko izvede le ob vključevanju deležnikov. Med udeleženci delavnice smo izvedli kratek kviz, kjer smo preverili, kako dobro poznajo cilje pravičnega prehoda v svoji regiji, ki so zapisani v Območnem načrtu za pravični prehod zasavske premogovne regije (ONPP).*

*Vir/Sources: <https://pravicni-prehod-zasjava.si/info-zasjava/abc-pravicnega-prehoda/obmocni-nacrt-za-pravicni-prehod-zasavske-premogovne-regije/>

INSIGHT

Zasavje, as a region committed to a just transition, can only achieve this transition through the inclusion of stakeholders. During the workshop, we conducted a brief quiz to assess how well the participants are familiar with the goals of the just transition in their region, which are outlined in the Territorial Just Transition Plan for the Zasavje Coal Region (TJTP).*

DELAVNICA 3

OSREDOTOČENOST NA PREDSTAVITEV »EU KANDIDATA« – FINALIZACIJA PREDLOGA Z REGIONALNIMI ODLOČEVALCI

Za boljšo navigacijo pri udejanjanju sistemskega pristopa je zelo uporabno orodje »A System Change Compass«.* Prikaže potrebo po celovitem pristopu k transformaciji – nabor jasnih političnih ukrepov za ponovno opredelitev blaginje, napredka, merit za merjenje uspeha, upravljanja, vodenja in vloge financ.

Dokument predstavi tudi več kot 50 nastajajočih industrijskih "prvakov", ki bodo vodili preobrazbo Evrope v bolj konkurenčno in okoljsko učinkovito gospodarstvo, skladno z družbenimi potrebami. **Ti prvaki** – od urbanega kmetijstva do pridelave morskih alg in vodikovih tehnologij – predstavljajo trajnostne industrije, ki bodo oblikovale gospodarsko hrbitenico Evrope v svetu z ničelnimi neto emisijami. Čeprav gre primarno za dokument namenjen odločevalcem na ravni EU, je zelo aktualen tudi za snovanje regionalnih razvojnih politik s trajnostno, krožno komponento.

*Vir: <https://www.systemiq.earth/system-change-compass/>

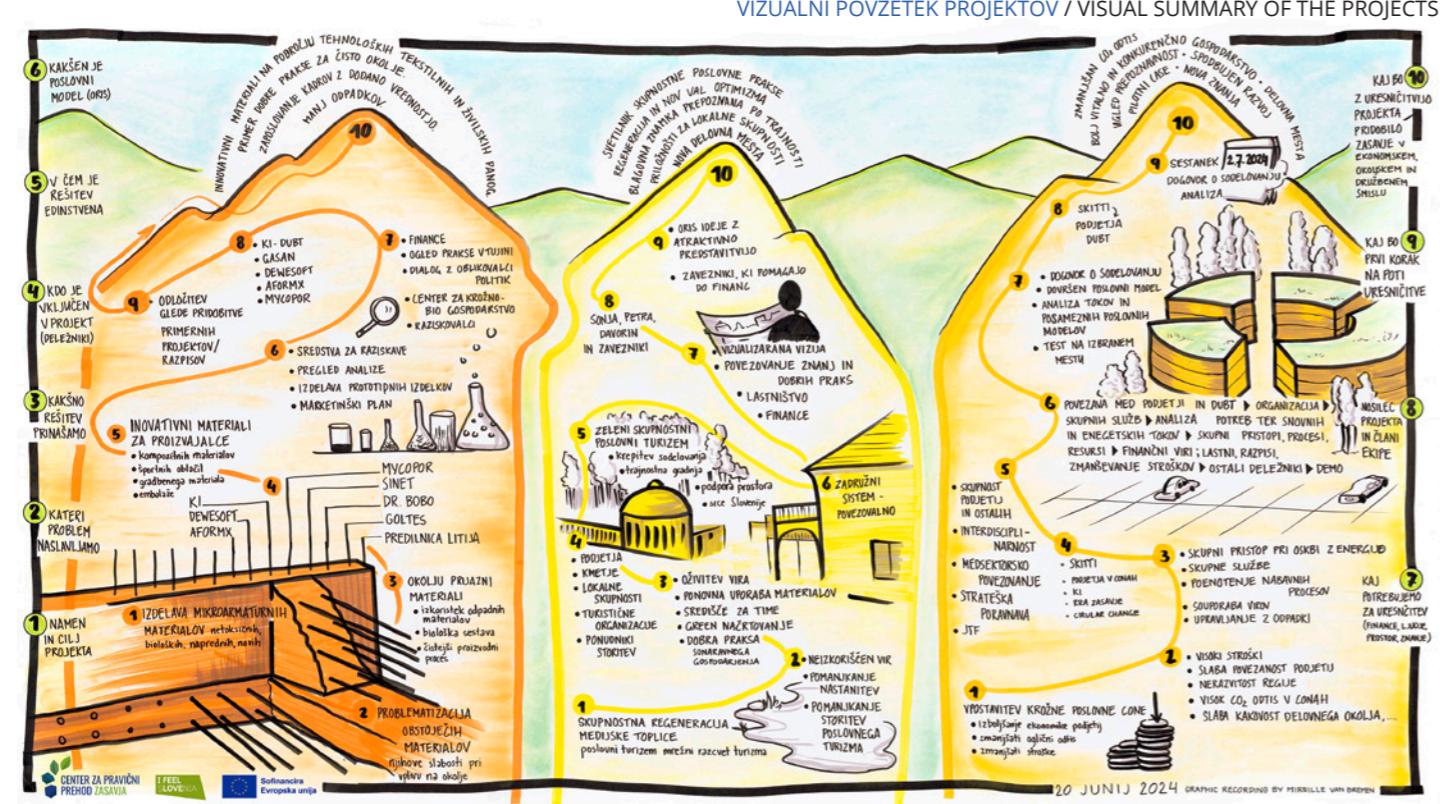
WORKSHOP 3

FOCUS ON THE PRESENTATION OF THE »EU CANDIDATE« – FINALIZATION OF THE PROPOSAL WITH REGIONAL DECISION-MAKERS

For better navigation in implementing a systemic approach, the tool “A System Change Compass” is very useful. It shows the need for a comprehensive approach to transformation – a set of clear political measures for redefining well-being, progress, success metrics, governance, leadership, and the role of finance.

The document also presents more than 50 emerging industrial “champions” who will lead Europe’s transition into a more competitive and environmentally efficient economy, aligned with societal needs. **These champions** – spanning urban farming, seaweed cultivation and hydrogen technologies – represent sustainable industries that will shape the economic backbone of Europe in a net-zero emissions world. Although primarily a document for decision-makers at the EU level, it is also highly relevant for regional development policies that incorporate sustainable, circular components.

*Source: <https://www.systemiq.earth/system-change-compass/>



V razpravi z udeleženci tretje delavnice, ki je sledila predstavitvi sistemskega kompasa, smo iskali sinergije v okviru regije, ki jih lahko prepoznamo kot nosilce sistemski spremembe. Ena od takih je **Center za razvoj, demonstracije in usposabljanje za brezoglične tehnologije** (Center DUBT), ki bo omogočal pospešitev prenosa znanja iz raziskovalnih enot v industrijo in komercialno uporabo. Center je v ONPP opredeljen kot operacija strateškega pomena.

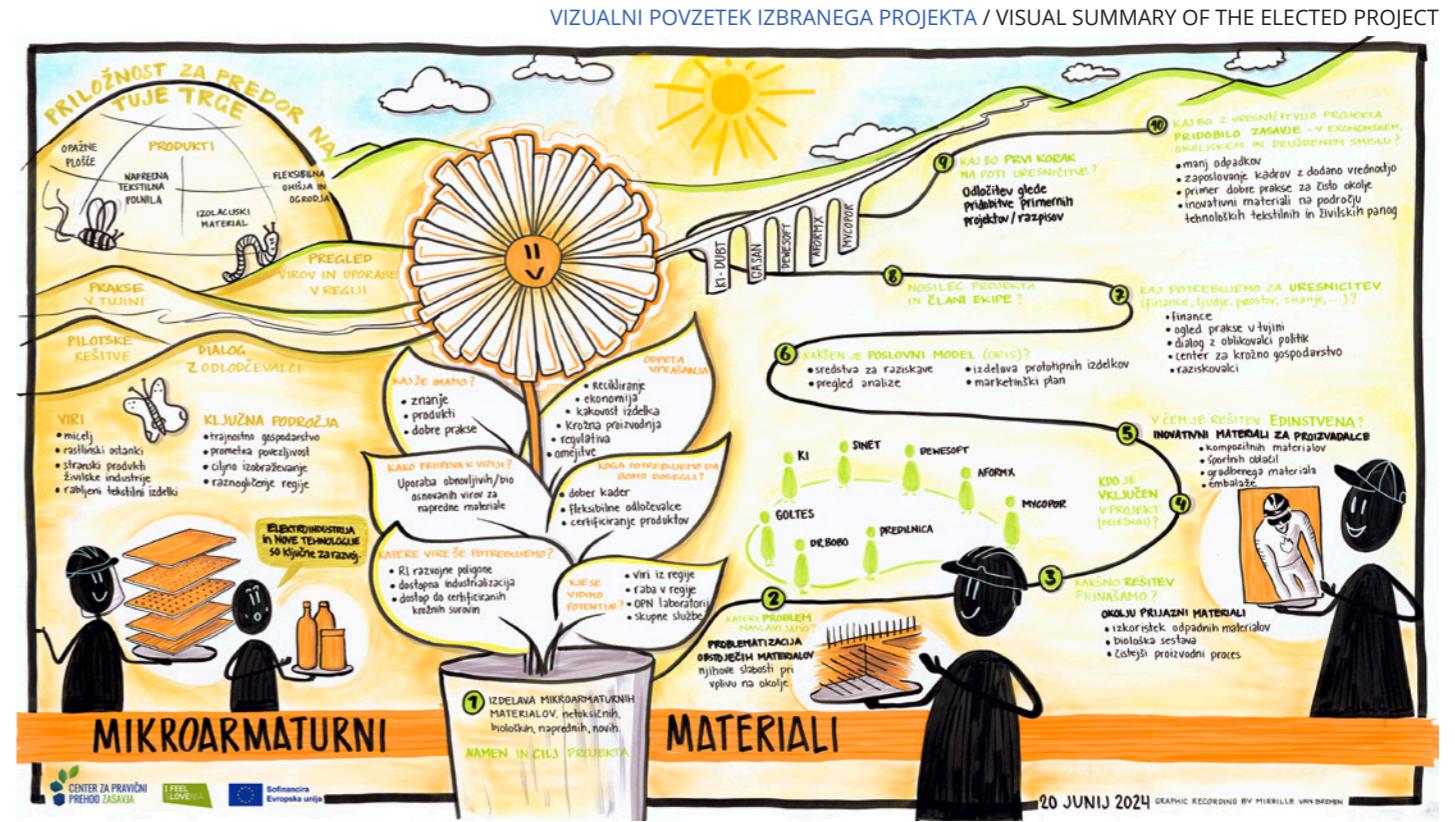
Drugi primer - **družba Dewesoft**. Dewesoft prispeva k sistemskim spremembam v Zasavju s podporo pravičnemu prehodu, saj ustvarja kakovostna delovna mesta, izobražuje lokalno skupnost in zmanjšuje odvisnost od premogovništva. Dewesoftove meritne rešitve se uporabljajo v panogah, ki so ključne za udejanjanje zelenega prehoda (energetika, mobilnost, vodikove tehnologije). **Mesto Akrobatov**, ki ga razvijata podjetje Dewesoft in **podjetniški pospeševalnik Katapult** v Trbovljah, ima za cilj ustvariti inovativno industrijsko in tehnološko okolje, ki bo omogočalo razvoj visoko tehnoloških izdelkov ter podpiralo trajnostno in krožno gospodarstvo.

Konkretni regionalni zgledi in primeri, ki smo jih spoznali v okviru strokovne ekskurzije na Nizozemskem, so v tej fazi akademije pomagali udeležencem izoblikovati atraktivne in obenem realistične »ptičje« treh projektov, ki smo jih izbrali kot nosilne ter jih umestiti v širši kontekst regije in Evrope. Zato smo jih poimenovali kar ambiciozno »EU kandidati«. Za vsakega od njih smo pripravili 10 korakov na poti do cilja.

During the discussion in the third workshop, which followed the presentation of the systemic compass, we looked for synergies within the region that could be recognized as drivers of systemic change. One such example is the **Center for the Development, Demonstration, and Training for Decarbonized Technologies** (Center DUBT), which will accelerate knowledge transfer from research units to industry and commercial use. The Center is identified in the TJTP as a strategic operation.

Another example is the **company Dewesoft**. Dewesoft contributes to systemic changes in Zasavje by supporting the just transition, as it creates quality jobs, educates the local community, and reduces dependence on coal mining. Dewesoft's measurement solutions are used in sectors that are key to implementing the green transition (energy, mobility, hydrogen technologies). **The "Akrobat" project**, developed by Dewesoft and the **Katapult Business Incubator** in Trbovlje, aims to create an innovative industrial and technological environment, that will enable the development of high-tech products and support sustainable and circular economies.

The specific regional examples we encountered during the professional study visit to the Netherlands provided valuable insight. They helped participants shape attractive yet realistic “pitches” for the three projects we selected as leading ones, placing them within the broader context of the region and Europe. We ambitiously named these projects “EU candidates”. For each of them, we prepared 10 steps toward achieving their goal.



PREBLISK



INSIGHT

Po opravljenih »pitcih« vseh treh »EU kandidatov« so udeleženci delavnice glasovali za favorita. Pripravili smo tri steklene posode, vsak udeleženec je prejel 10 simbolnih žetonov in jih razporedil med tri projekte glede na to, kako prepričljive so bile prezentacije. Tako smo dobili internega zmagovalca.



MODUL 4
MODULE 4

DELAVNICA 4

KROŽNA MREŽA ZASAVJA – SISTEMSKA UMESTITEV PREDLOGA V CELOVITO KROŽNO & PRAVIČNO TRANSFORMACIJO REGIJE

Razumevanje posameznih organov načrtovanja in upravljanja na ravni regije ni dovolj razumljeno in prepoznano s strani širše javnosti. Zato tudi proaktivno vključevanje različnih deležnikov, ki bi lahko skozi obstoječe strukture predstavljali svoje ideje, ne zaživi v polnem potencialu.

Za strateško in sistemsko umeščanje projektov, ki so se izoblikovali v okviru akademije, v obstoječi ustroj institucij in organov, ki predstavljajo razvojno upravljavsko jedro Zasavja, smo že zeleli preveriti, katere so potencialne vstopne točke za navezovanje stikov in predstavitev projektov. Izkazalo se je, da razumevanje tega, kateri organi na regionalni ravni že delujejo in kakšne so priložnosti, da v okviru njihovih razvojnih načrtov in aktivnosti udeleženci akademije predstavijo svojo vizijo in cilje, potrebuje dodatno razlago. Zato smo s pomočjo predstavnikov RRA Zasavje in Centra za pravični prehod Zasavja pripravili pregleden seznam teh organov in njihovih pristojnosti – izrisali smo ekosistem odločevalcev Zasavja.

Naslednji korak je bil seznanitev z načeli, ki nam lahko pomagajo pri izvajanju pravičnega, krožnega prehoda in ogledali smo si načela Chapter Zero* in Kodeks odločanja v smeri krožnosti, ki je bil predstavljen na ravni Mestne občine Ljubljana. Predstavljene prakse so bile izhodišče za snovanje vodil, ki smo jih oblikovali za odločevalce v zasavski regiji s ciljem, da bodo kriteriji trajnosti in krožnosti upoštevani v procesu odločanja.

*Vir: <https://www.chapterzeroslovenia.si/>

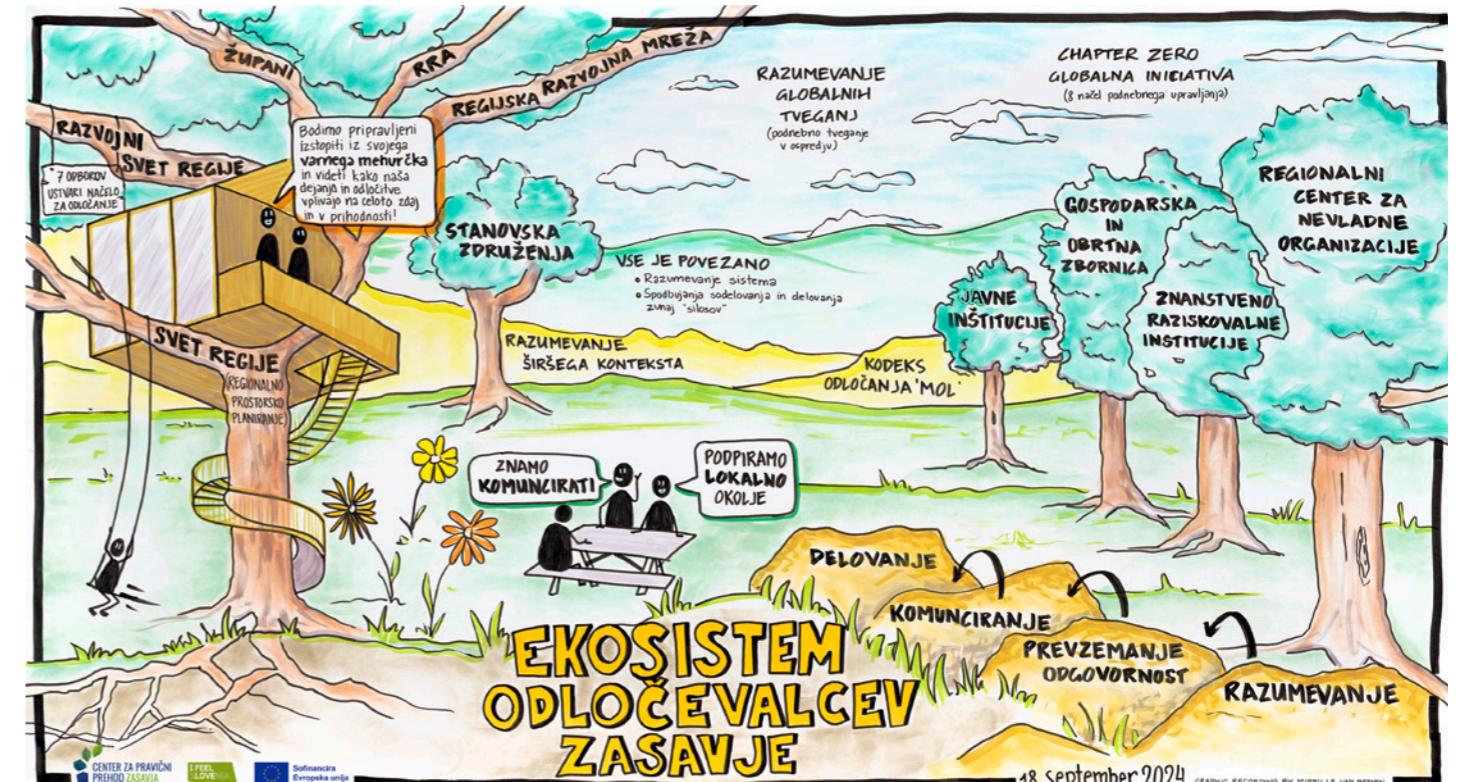
WORKSHOP 4

CIRCULAR NETWORK OF ZASAVJE – SYSTEMIC PLACEMENT OF THE PROPOSAL IN THE COMPREHENSIVE CIRCULAR & JUST TRANSFORMATION OF THE REGION

The roles of planning and management at a regional level is not sufficiently understood or recognized by the wider public. As a result, the proactive involvement of various stakeholders, who could present their ideas through existing structures, does not fully thrive.

To strategically and systematically integrate the projects developed within the academy into the existing institutional framework, we sought to identify potential entry points for presenting and connecting these initiatives to regional decision-making bodies. It turned out that further clarification was needed to understand which bodies are already operational at the regional level and what opportunities exist for academy participants to introduce their visions and goals into their development plans and activities. Therefore, with the help of representatives from the Zasavje Development Agency (RRA Zasavje) and the Zasavje Just Transition Center, we created a clear list of these bodies and their responsibilities – we mapped out the decision-makers' ecosystem of Zasavje.

The next step was to familiarize ourselves with the principles that can assist in implementing a just, circular transition. We reviewed the Chapter Zero principles and the Decision-Making Code for Circularity, which was presented at the City Municipality of Ljubljana. These practices served as a foundation for creating guidelines, which we developed for decision-makers in the Zasavje region with the goal that sustainability and circularity criteria will be taken into account in the decision-making process.*



GRAFIČNI POSNETEK DELAVNICE / GRAPHIC RECORDING OF THE WORKSHOP

*Vir: <https://www.chapterzeroslovenia.si/>

In the final part of the fourth workshop, we focused on the SMART goal-setting method (Specificity, Measurability, Achievability, Relevance, Time-bound). Each individual set a personal SMART goal, and in groups, we defined SMART project goals for the three selected projects, which should serve as a guide for implementing the proposed projects in practice. The SMART framework provides clarity, focus, and a realistic timeline for achieving results.

Since public presentations can be a challenge for those not accustomed to public speaking, we provided mentorship to help representatives prepare for the presentation and develop basic public speaking skills. Each project team selected a representative to present the project to the broader public at the Zasavje 2024 Regional Conference.

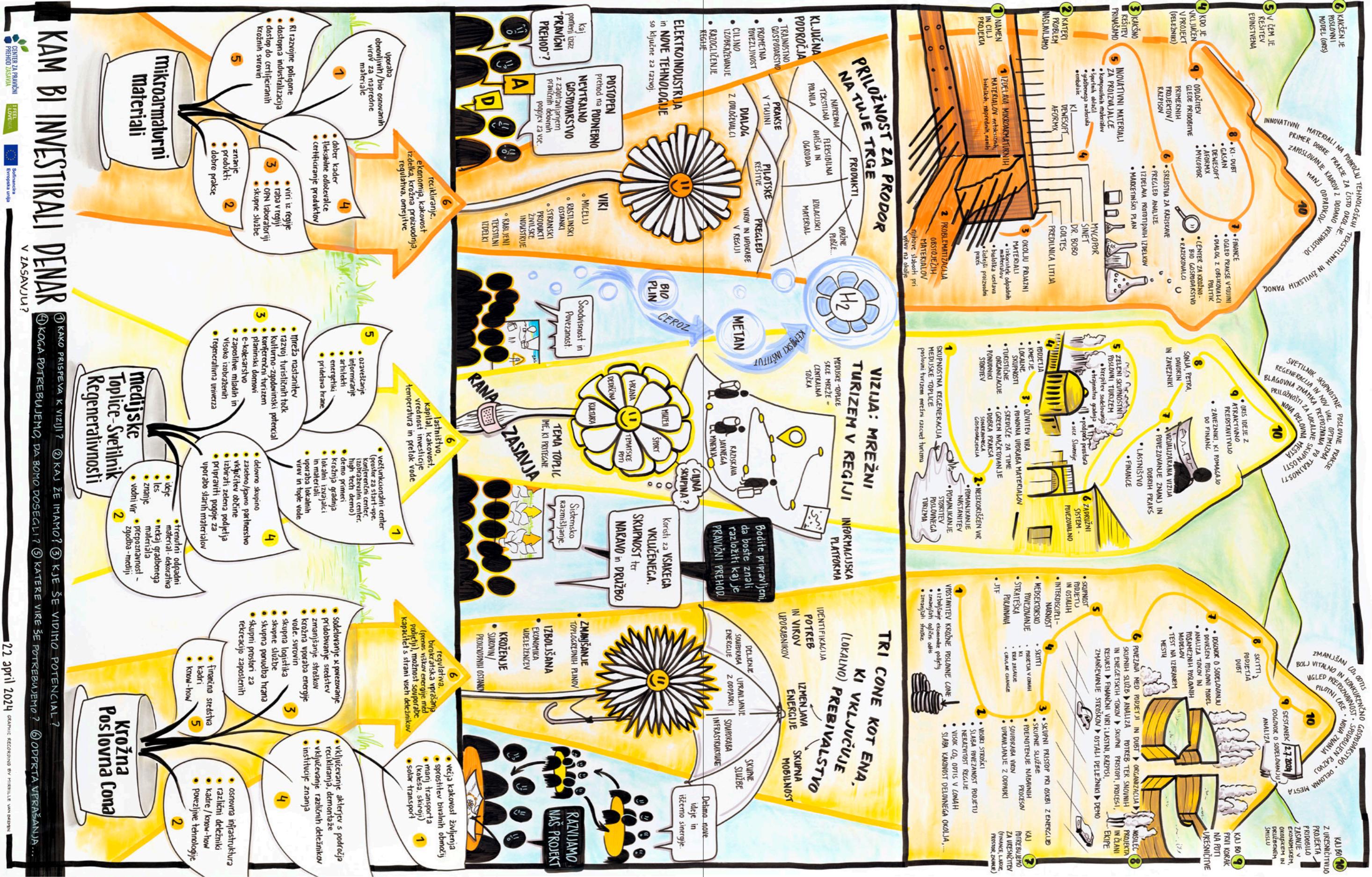


PREBLISK

Za udeležence zaključnega modula smo pripravili »motivacijski termometer«. Izmerili smo stopnjo motivacije udeležencev za nadaljevanje dela na izbranih treh projektih – večina je izkazala strast in željo po nadaljnjem vlaganju energije v projekte, nihče ni čutil neodločnosti ali nemotiviranosti.

INSIGHT

For the participants of the final module, we prepared a «motivation thermometer.» We measured the participants' motivation level to continue working on the selected three projects – most showed passion and a desire to continue investing energy in the projects, and no one expressed indecisiveness or lack of motivation.



7 MENTORSTVA MENTORING

Mentorstva so dvosmerni proces. Mentoriranci so na srečanje pripravili skladno z vnaprej pripravljenimi smernicami, mentorji pa smo jih vodili pri kreiranju idej, rešitev, povezav, nadgrajevanja znanj. Program akademije je vključeval 15 mentorskih ur. 6 ur je bilo namenjenih dodelavi krožnih poslovnih modelov, 6 ur za pripravo predstavnikov skupin za pitch na konferenci in 3 ure za orkestracijo procesov za vpostavitev krožne poslovne cone.



8 KONFERENCA CONFERENCE

Regionalna konferenca Pravičnega prehoda Zasavje. Dogodek je organizirala Regionalna razvojna agencija Zasavje z namenom predstavitev rezultatov strateškega programa Pravičnega prehoda Zasavje. Dogodek je bil priložnost za predstavitev Krožne akademije Zasavje, osrednjega programa Centra za pravični prehod Zasavja v letu 2024. Trije konkretni predlogi krožnih projektov so doživeli svojo prvo javno razgrnitev, ki ji je sledila panelna razprava z nosilci projektov. Dogodek je zaokrožila slavnostna podelitev certifikatov udeležencem akademije.

9 ZASNOVA BROŠURE BROCHURE CONCEPT

Publikacija kot navdih za EU regije v pravičnem prehodu. Odločitev za brošuro je nastala kot refleksija na proces akademije. Izkušnje, ki smo jih pridobili, metodologija, ki smo jo udejanjili in dragocena mreža odnosov, ki smo jo vzpostavili, so sestavine, ki naj bodo spodbuda ter vodilo za druge regije in države, ki se soočajo s podobnimi izvivi uresničevanja pravičnega in krožnega prehoda kot Zasavje.

Mentoring is a two-way process. Mentees prepared for the meeting based on pre-established guidelines, while we, the mentors, guided them in creating ideas, solutions, building connections, and enhancing knowledge. The academy program included 15 mentoring hours. 6 hours were dedicated to refining circular business models, 6 hours for preparing group representatives for the pitch at the conference, and 3 hours for orchestrating processes for establishing a circular business zone.

The Regional Conference on the Just Transition of Zasavje. The event was organized by the Zasavje Regional Development Agency with the aim of presenting the results of the strategic program for Zasavje's Just Transition. It was an opportunity to showcase the Zasavje Circular Academy, the flagship program of the Zasavje Just Transition Center in 2024. Three concrete circular project proposals were presented for the first time, followed by a panel discussion with the project leaders. The event concluded with a formal certificate presentation to the academy participants.

Publication as Inspiration for EU Regions in Just Transition. The decision to create this brochure came as a reflection of the academy's process. The experiences we gained, the methodology we implemented, and the valuable network of relationships we established are the key components that should serve as encouragement and guidance for other regions and countries facing similar challenges in achieving a just and circular transition, just as Zasavje is doing.

10 PRIPRAVA NOVIH MODULOV PREPARATION OF NEW MODULES

Proces kliče po nadaljevanju. Predlog za 2. Krožno akademijo Zasavja izhaja iz zaključkov in projektov, ki so bili zasnovani in so pripravljeni do ravni, da lahko kandidirajo za finančna sredstva in se v srednjeročnem obdobju udejanjijo kot pomemben del pravičnega zelenega in krožnega prehoda Zasavja, ki predstavlja »svetilnik dobre prakse« tudi v širšem evropskem prostoru.

Ambicija nadaljevanja akademije je razviti dodatno podporo krožni transformaciji z zagonom krožnih poslovnih con ter »peskovnika« (eksperimentalnega območja), še okrepliti mednarodno sodelovanje in vključevanje različnih deležnikov – od mladih do obrtnikov, in na vključujoč način komunicirati poslovne dosežke in priložnosti regije.

»Network governance« temelji na medsebojnem zaupaju, deljenju znanja in soustvarjanju rešitev. Ključno je, da vsi akterji delujejo kot enakovredni partnerji, pri čemer iščemo sinergije med njihovimi interesi in viri.

The Process Calls for Continuation. The proposal for the 2nd Zasavje Circular Academy arises from the conclusions and projects that have been designed and are now ready to apply for funding and be implemented in the medium term as a significant part of the just green and circular transition of Zasavje, which serves as a "beacon of good practice" in the wider European context.

The ambition for the continuation of the academy is to develop additional support for the circular transformation by launching circular business zones and an experimental "sandbox". It also seeks to, further strengthen international cooperation, and involve various stakeholders—from young people to craftsmen—while promoting the region's business achievements and opportunities inclusively.

Network governance" is based on mutual trust, knowledge sharing, and co-creating solutions. The key is that all actors function as equal partners, seeking synergies between their interests and resources.

»NETWORK GOVERNANCE« - ZA RAZCVET REGIJE

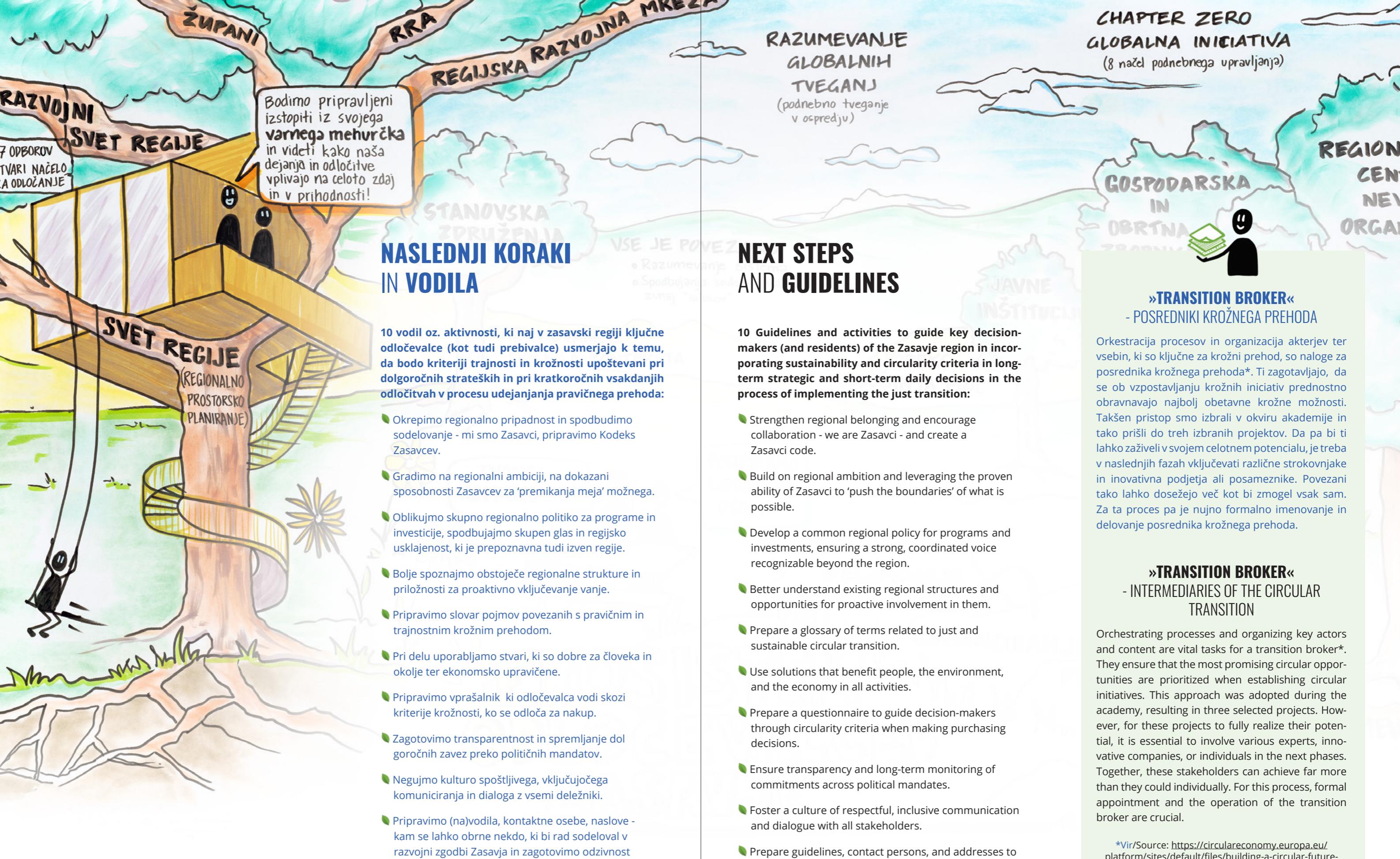


Izraz »network governance« je težko prevedljiv v slovenski jezik, razumemo ga lahko kot neke vrste »omrežno upravljanje«. Je komplementarno javnemu upravljanju. Povzemamo razlagu prof. Jacqueline Cramer*, ki izpostavlja, da gre za obliko vodenja in sodelovanja, kjer različni deležniki (vlade, podjetja, nevladne organizacije, znanstveniki itd.) sodelujejo, da bi dosegli skupne cilje, predvsem na področjih kot so trajnost, inovacije ali reševanje kompleksnih družbenih izzivov.

*Vir/Sources: https://assets.ctfassets.net/fqjwh0badmlx/1elraV8llz6bCeHJYntNF0/3d1b3fda50f0bce1062ad1c043972c68/Network_governance_for_Circular_Economy_web_version.pdf

Takšen pristop »od spodaj navzgor«, ki vključuje različne deležnike in različne pobude, smo prakticirali v okviru akademije. Za prehod v krožno gospodarstvo je odločilen miselni preskok od tega, da bodo odgovornost za transformacijo v celoti prevzele javne institucije, v aktivacijo moči deležnikov. Ti ob ustremnem povezovanju in orkestraciji lahko vzpostavijo v gibanje, ki ob združevanju ambicij, interesov, ciljev in virov, lahko postane izjemno močno in prebojno. Zasavje – evropski svetilnik krožnega in pravičnega prehoda se tako iz vizije prelevi v resnično zgodbo o uspehu.

This "bottom-up" approach, which involves different stakeholders, was practiced within the framework of the academy. The shift to a circular economy requires a change in mindset - from believing that public institutions will fully take responsibility for the transformation, to activating the power of stakeholders. By connecting and orchestrating these actors, they can create a movement that, when combining ambitions, interests, goals, and resources, can become incredibly powerful and transformative. In this way, Zasavje—envisioned as a European beacon of circular and just transition—evolves from a vision into a tangible success story.



NASLEDNJI KORAKI IN VODILA

10 vodil oz. aktivnosti, ki naj v zasavski regiji ključne odločevalce (kot tudi prebivalce) usmerjajo k temu, da bodo kriteriji trajnosti in krožnosti upoštevani pri dolgoročnih strateških in pri kratkoročnih vsakdanjih odločitvah v procesu udejanjanja pravičnega prehoda:

- Okrepimo regionalno pripadnost in spodbudimo sodelovanje - mi smo Zasavci, pripravimo Kodeks Zasavcev.
- Gradimo na regionalni ambiciji, na dokazani sposobnosti Zasavcev za 'premikanja meja' možnega.
- Oblikujmo skupno regionalno politiko za programe in investicije, spodbujajmo skupen glas in regijsko usklajenost, ki je prepoznavna tudi izven regije.
- Bolje spoznajmo obstoječe regionalne strukture in priložnosti za proaktivno vključevanje vanje.
- Pripravimo slovar pojmov povezanih s pravičnim in trajnostnim krožnim prehodom.
- Pri delu uporabljamo stvari, ki so dobre za človeka in okolje ter ekonomsko upravičene.
- Pripravimo vprašalnik, ki odločevalca vodi skozi kriterije krožnosti, ko se odloča za nakup.
- Zagotovimo transparentnost in spremljanje dolgoročnih zavez preko političnih mandatov.
- Negujmo kulturo spoštljivega, vključujočega komuniciranja in dialoga z vsemi deležniki.
- Pripravimo (na)vodila, kontaktne osebe, naslove - kam se lahko obrne nekdo, ki bi rad sodeloval v razvojni zgodbi Zasavja in zagotovimo odzivnost prejemnikov pobud.

RAZUMEVANJE GLOBALNIH TVEGANJ
(podnebno tveganje v ospredju)

NEXT STEPS AND GUIDELINES

10 Guidelines and activities to guide key decision-makers (and residents) of the Zasavje region in incorporating sustainability and circularity criteria in long-term strategic and short-term daily decisions in the process of implementing the just transition:

- Strengthen regional belonging and encourage collaboration - we are Zasavci - and create a Zasavci code.
- Build on regional ambition and leveraging the proven ability of Zasavci to 'push the boundaries' of what is possible.
- Develop a common regional policy for programs and investments, ensuring a strong, coordinated voice recognizable beyond the region.
- Better understand existing regional structures and opportunities for proactive involvement in them.
- Prepare a glossary of terms related to just and sustainable circular transition.
- Use solutions that benefit people, the environment, and the economy in all activities.
- Prepare a questionnaire to guide decision-makers through circularity criteria when making purchasing decisions.
- Ensure transparency and long-term monitoring of commitments across political mandates.
- Foster a culture of respectful, inclusive communication and dialogue with all stakeholders.
- Prepare guidelines, contact persons, and addresses to enable interested parties to engage in Zasavje's development story—and ensure responsiveness to their initiatives.

CHAPTER ZERO
GLOBALNA INICIATIVA
(8 načel podnebnega upravljanja)

»TRANSITION BROKER«
- POSREDNIKI KROŽNEGA PREHODA

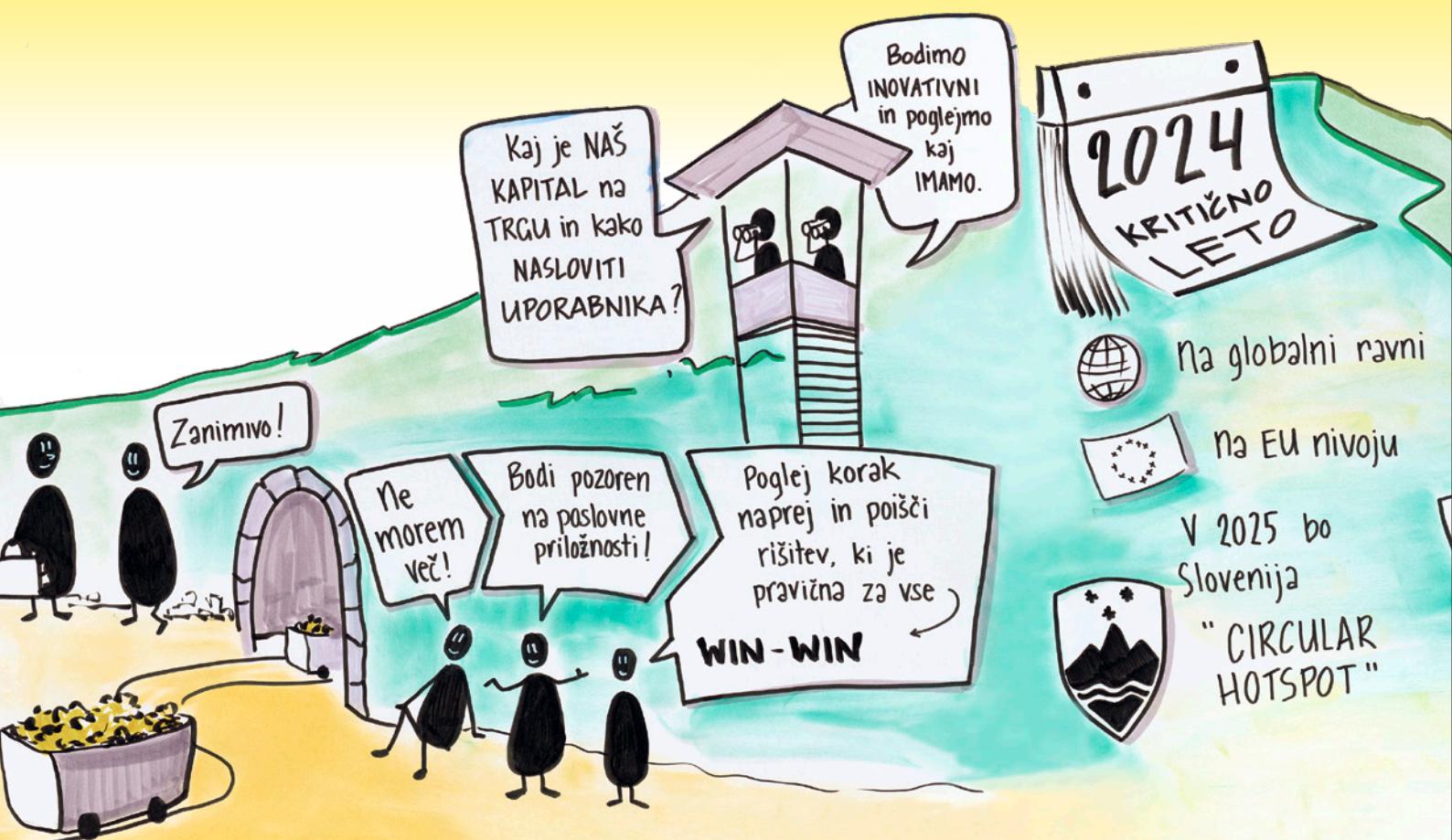
Orkestracija procesov in organizacija akterjev ter vsebin, ki so ključne za krožni prehod, so naloge za posrednika krožnega prehoda*. Ti zagotavljajo, da se ob vzpostavljanju krožnih iniciativ prednostno obravnavajo najbolj obetavne krožne možnosti. Takšen pristop smo izbrali v okviru akademije in tako prišli do treh izbranih projektov. Da pa bi ti lahko zaživeli v svojem celotnem potencialu, je treba v naslednjih fazah vključevati različne strokovnjake in inovativna podjetja ali posameznike. Povezani tako lahko dosežejo več kot bi zmogel vsak sam. Za ta proces pa je nujno formalno imenovanje in delovanje posrednika krožnega prehoda.

»TRANSITION BROKER«
- INTERMEDIARIES OF THE CIRCULAR TRANSITION

Orchestrating processes and organizing key actors and content are vital tasks for a transition broker*. They ensure that the most promising circular opportunities are prioritized when establishing circular initiatives. This approach was adopted during the academy, resulting in three selected projects. However, for these projects to fully realize their potential, it is essential to involve various experts, innovative companies, or individuals in the next phases. Together, these stakeholders can achieve far more than they could individually. For this process, formal appointment and the operation of the transition broker are crucial.

*Vir/Source: <https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/sites/default/files/building-a-circular-future-jacqueline-cramer-amsterdam-economic-board.pdf>

www.pravici-prehod-zasavja.si



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