

ESPON QoL – Quality of Life Measurements and Methodology

Annex 10 to the Final Report

Case study: Nova Gorica - Gorizia

30th October 2020

Final Report

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Disclaimer:

This document is an Annex to the Final report.

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The final version of the report will be published as soon as approved.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|---|
| ARSO | Slovenian Environmental Agency |
| BES | Equitable and Sustainable Well-being |
| CB PUMP | Cross Border Public Urban Mobility Plan |
| CPS | Cross-border Public Services |
| DG REGIO | Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy |
| EC | European Commission |
| EGTC | European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation |
| EU-SPI | EU- Social Progress Index |
| FUA | Functional Urban Area |
| FVG | Friuli Venezia Giulia |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GURS | The surveying and mapping authority of the Republic of Slovenia |
| ICRA | Idrijsko-Cerkljanska razvojna agencija d.o.o. Idrija |
| ISTAT | National Institute of Statistics |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IT | Italy |
| ITI | Integrated Territorial Investment |
| NIJZ | National Institute for Public Health |
| NLZOH | National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food |
| NSDS | National Sustainable Development Strategy |
| NUTS | Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PUMAS | Planning sustainable regional-Urban Mobility in the Alpin Space |
| PUMP | Public Urban Mobility Plan |
| QoL | Quality of Life |
| ROD | Razvojna agencija ROD Ajdovščina |
| RRA | RRA SEVERNE PRIMORSKE d.o.o. Nova Gorica |
| RSDS | Regional Sustainable Development Strategy |
| PPP | Purchasing power parity |
| PRC | Posoški razvojni center |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SI | Slovenia |
| SUMP | Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan |
| TQoL | Territorial Quality of Life |
| UN | United Nations |
| UTI | Inter-Municipal Territorial Unions |

Introduction

This is one of the 10 case studies of the ESPON study “Quality of Life Measurements and Methodology”. The purpose and results of the study, including the definition and application of a territorial quality of life measurement methodology, the synthesis of all case study findings, targeted policy recommendations, ideas for fostering cooperation between ESPON, EUROSTAT, OECD and the UN and recommendations for further research, are illustrated in the Final Report, to which this case study report is annexed.

The purpose of the case studies is twofold:

- A) to collect good practices that can be adopted in other European regions, and
- B) to make use of the methodology developed and allow for adjustments through testing in case studies.

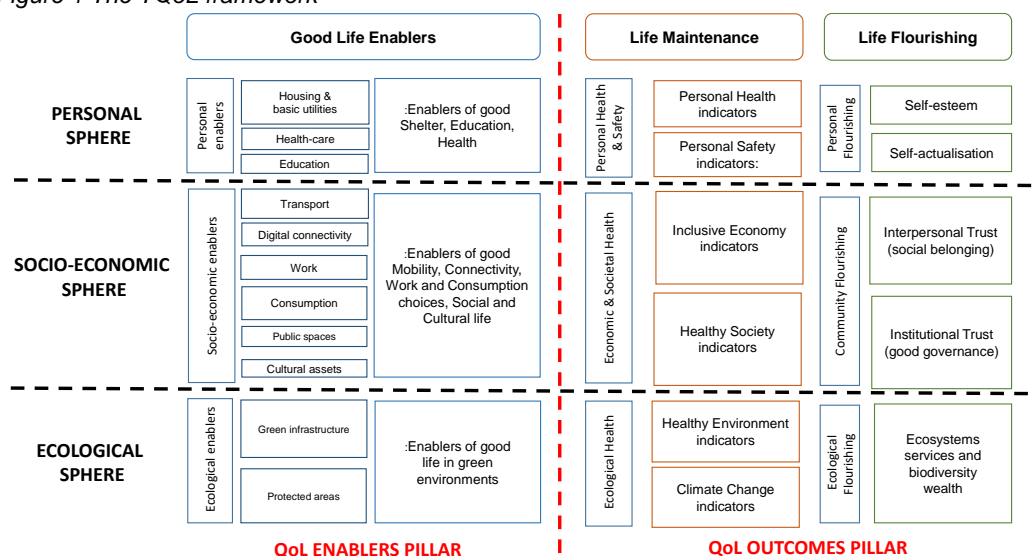
Each case study provides examples of application of the concept of quality of life (QoL) in a specific region. This complements the conceptual model and the research done at European level. The reasons why this region has been chosen forms part of Section 1.

For objective A) the case study report explores the policy context, in which QoL is used and measured in the region (Section 2). It is important to understand for which purpose the concept has been established, in which policy fields it is being used, how different levels of government are involved and which success factors and obstacles can be identified. Section 3 explains the indicators, measurement methods and data that are used for measuring QoL.

Objective B) is covered in Section 4. The study defines and tests a methodology to measure QoL at territorial (sub-national) level and offers guidance to policy makers at different levels – local, regional, national, European – on how to integrate QoL in policy processes and in territorial development strategies. We have applied to the case studies the methodology developed in the main report. This includes the Territorial Quality of Life (TQoL) measurement system and the system for coding indicators.

The TQoL framework defines the system and its main elements (pillars, spheres, sub-domains) to measure QoL facets with reference to territorial entities identified. This is shown in the TQoL framework in figure 1 below.

Figure 1 The TQoL framework



The system for **coding indicators** to represent and monitor adequately the different QoL domains, defined in the TQoL framework, is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Coding of the indicator system in the TQoL framework

| Dimension | Domain | Sub-domain | Definition |
|--------------------|------------------------------|---|------------|
| Good Life Enablers | Personal enablers | Housing & basic utilities | |
| | | Health | |
| | | Education | |
| | Socioeconomic enablers | Transport | |
| | | ICT connectivity | |
| | | Work opportunities | |
| | | Consumption opportunities | |
| | | Public spaces | |
| | Ecological enablers | Cultural Assets | |
| | | Green infrastructure | |
| Life Maintenance | Personal Health and Safety | Protected areas | |
| | | Personal health indicators | |
| | Economic and Societal Health | Personal safety indicators | |
| | | Inclusive economy indicators | |
| | Ecological Health | Healthy Society indicators | |
| | | Healthy Environment indicators | |
| | | Climate change indicators | |
| | | | |
| Life Flourishing | Personal Flourishing | Self-esteem | |
| | | Self-actualization | |
| | Community Flourishing | Interpersonal Trust (Social Belonging) | |
| | | Institutional Trust (good governance) | |
| | Ecological Flourishing | Ecosystems services and biodiversity wealth | |

Both, the TQoL framework and the coding system are applied in all case studies (Sections 4.1 and 4.2).

The methodology developed in this report includes further elements - a dashboard, the latent clustering approach and the citizen-centric approach - that are applied in the case studies, if sufficient data or information have been available. These elements are as follows:

- The indicators coded for local or sub-regional territorial units are presented in a **dashboard** (in an Excel-based tool). In the dashboard different points in time or objective and subjective indicators can be included and compared at territorial unit level. The specific indicators used to monitor the QoL domains are different in each case, as they take into account specific local circumstances that influence the selection of indicators (e.g. availability of data, local priorities and practices).
- In the case studies that cover a large number of territorial units the **Latent Class clustering model** helps to analyse underlying patterns and spatial differences of territorial QoL. However, the number of case studies falling in this category is small.
- A descriptive element of the TQoL approach identified in this applied-research project is the “**citizen-centric**” **approach**, where citizens are engaged in co-design, implementation and fact-checking activities (“factfulness” tests), to make the measurement of territorial QoL more responsive to the needs and aspirations of citizens to improve their everyday life. This can be promoted, recommended, and applied within the different case study contexts highlighting in particular any existing local practice of citizen engagement that could be adopted as a concrete example of the approach.

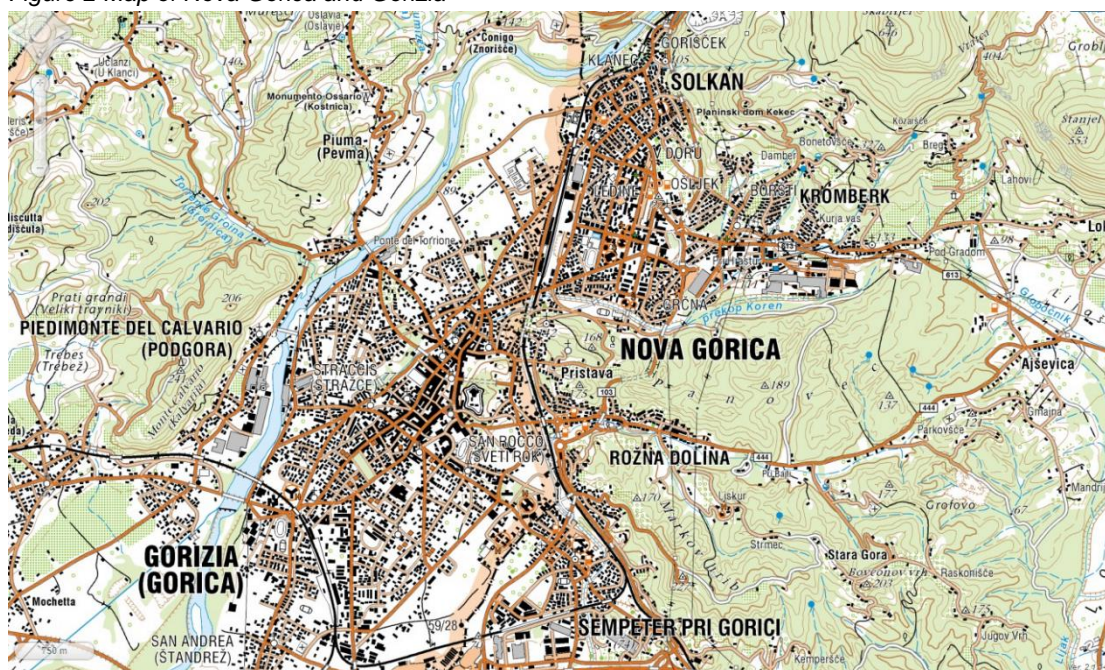
These methodological elements are considered in the case studies which were carried out to investigate and compare noteworthy experiences of territorial QoL measurements against the TQoL framework that has been developed with the aim of drawing lessons for further adjusting and fine tuning the methodology, which will eventually allow for its practical and widespread use for measuring QoL across territories in Europe.

1 Description of the region

1.1 Characteristics of the region

Nova Gorica and Gorizia are twin-cities – on the two sides of the Italy-Slovenia border - and together form a cross-border Functional Urban Area (FUA) located at the foot of the Julian Alps and the confluence of the Isonzo-Soča and Vipava-Vipacco Valleys. Thus, they are situated at the crossroads between predominantly two linguistic and cultural influences: Slavic, and Italian.

Figure 2 Map of Nova Gorica and Gorizia



The town of Gorizia formed part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918 then after the First World War, it became Italian. After 1947, the Paris Peace Treaty established a new border, leaving Gorizia without its natural hinterland and outside Yugoslavia, which obtained the relatively small eastern part of the town, including the train station. The Severna Primorska region was therefore left without an administrative, economic and cultural centre. In 1948 Yugoslavia began the construction of a new settlement a new city called Nova Gorica, which is now the administrative center of the Goriška region and a municipality with the competencies of a city municipality. After the collapse of Yugoslavia and Slovenia's declaration of independence in 1991, daily cross-border flows changed direction, with many Italians crossing the border into Slovenia mostly to purchase goods and services at a lower price. Nova Gorica also became home to casinos and gambling, which were more strictly regulated in Italy. Slovenia's entry into the European Union in 2004, then into the Schengen Area in 2007 has enabled better conditions for a joint functioning of this urban area. Recently, the border has been again closed due to the COVID-19 emergency.

Table 2 Gorizia and Nova Gorica population, area, and population density

| NUTS 3 CODE | LAU CODE | LAU NAME NATIONAL | POPULATION | TOTAL AREA (km ²) | POPULATION DENSITY |
|-------------|----------|-------------------|------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| SI043 | 084 | Nova Gorica | 31.884 | 279,49 | 113,8 |
| ITH43 | 031007 | Gorizia | 34.336 | 41,26 | 832,1 |

Source: Slovenia (SI-STAT), Italy (ISTAT)

The area of Nova Gorica and its surroundings is characterised by a hilly landscape, with the plateau of Banjšice (Italian: *Altopiano della Bainsizza*). According to several studies¹, viticulture is the most important agricultural industry with the longest tradition. In addition to that, fruit growing, agricultural and horticultural production are also important, facilitated by good natural conditions. In recent years, cultivation of olives is increasing, together with new crops such as lavender and herbs, and growing interest in organic farming has spread to some areas.

Considering the industrial and service activities, the highest number of enterprises operates in the field of trade, maintenance services and motor vehicles, followed by professional, scientific, and technical activities. Thus, the city is specialised in trade and service industries, including a growing number of technological enterprises, fostered by the presence of the University of Nova Gorica, established in 2006 with a strong focus on Environmental Sciences and Engineering.

The FUA area is situated at a strategic long-distance transport junction, connecting the western and eastern parts of Central Europe. Traffic accessibility on the road is good enough, with the Slovenian expressway H4 (Nova Gorica-Razdrto) and Italian highway A34 (Gorizia-Villesse) serving as the main connection and an important transit route for passengers and cargo, while the rail connections are poor and do not provide adequate support to the economy or passengers. The proximity of Trieste Airport in Ronchi dei Legionari, Italy, also increases connectivity, as it is only 25 km away from Nova Gorica.

The peculiar settlement and cultural dynamics

During the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the area of Gorizia and Nova Gorica represented a unique administrative unit with a melting pot of three populations – German, Italian and Slavic – which was however limited by strong social class divisions: a German nobility, an Italian bourgeoisie, and a Friulan and Slovenian popular mass. Later during the first world war, productive structures became military objectives, and the entire area has been severely hit by armed conflicts. Under the Italian fascist government, Slovenians suffered harsh processes of denationalisation,

After the signing of the Paris Agreement in 1947, the iconic Transalpina square / Trg Evrope was divided between Italy and Yugoslavia. In a few days, a conspicuous movement of people opted for one part or the other of the border – similar to what happened later in the most famous case of Berlin. For the first time in history, Gorizia was no longer at the centre of an area but severed by a national frontier.

The border deprived Gorizia in Italy of its hinterland while on the other side, in Yugoslavia, there was a suburban settlement without a centre of reference. Gorizia focused its development on building new residential districts to satisfy the increasing demand for new housing, also coming from newcomers, without investing in the regeneration of the historic centre. On the other hand, Nova Gorica is a 'planned city' designed at the end of 1947 by architect Edvard Ravnikar, a pupil of Le Corbusier, famous Swiss-French architect.

Nowadays, as a consequence of its recent construction, Nova Gorica is a city with a low average age, a higher level of education than the rest of the country, and a really active youth life. On the contrary, population is ageing in Gorizia – similar in this respect to Trieste, one of

¹ project reports as Portrait of the EU Regions, INTERREG III A Italia-Slovenia and publications of the University of Nova Gorica - Environment and Agriculture.

the cities with the highest average age in Italy. To counteract this ageing trend, several university courses, belonging to Trieste and Udine universities, have been located in Gorizia, attracting youths and reducing the urban decay, even if university students are a temporary presence and numerically limited.

As already mentioned, after the 1st world war this area has been the home of two main cultures and several dialects. The coexistence has not always been peaceful. During the years of fascism, Slovenian's denationalisation was brutal since they closed Slovenian public schools, prohibited population from using non-Italian languages in public, and Slavic surnames were Italianised. This created strong resentments and obviously hindered inter-cultural relations.

Nowadays, the linguistic question still reveals the scarcely internalised coexistence. The Slovenian-speaking minority in Gorizia is about one-eighth of the population and, even if there are some Slovene schools in the Italian cross-border area, Italian schools do not teach Slovene². Every single proposal to introduce a form of bilingualism has always been refused, even if the legal framework to support the teaching and dissemination of relative bordering languages is available for both municipalities.

The advantage of bilingualism was never emphasised, and this knowledge and mutual understanding gap transformed into fear for cultural and language integration, often ridden by right-wing parties in their electoral campaigns³, and immobilising intercultural relationships and multicultural processes. Currently, the knowledge of the neighbouring language is very unevenly distributed on the two sides of the border. However, even if Slovenian schools do not teach Italian, the knowledge of this language is widespread on the other side of the border due to the high number of cross-frontier workers.

The GO! 2025 project, with the application of Nova Gorica and Gorizia to be awarded as European Capital of Culture in 2025, recognises the difficulty of communicating and understanding neighbours as the main obstacle for cultural integration. The main goal of the project is indeed to foster bilingualism in the region for allowing different memories to co-exist, and trigger a cultural movement shared by the twin cities.

Socio-economic features

Nova Gorica represents the urban centre of the Goriška statistical region. With its central activities provides an important support to the region, the conurbation of Nova Gorica and Gorizia and its functional hinterland. As an urban centre of national importance, Nova Gorica has adequate economic and social infrastructure as well as public services. The city is recognised for its university and research institutions as well as for its cultural, social, administrative, and business activities. In recent years Nova Gorica has been losing jobs, reducing its role of main employment centre. The loss of jobs in Nova Gorica is not only the result of the economic crisis in connection with the restructuring of the economy after the Yugoslavia breakdown, but it is also due to the loss of one of the key economic generators in the area – the State border – after the inclusion of Slovenia in the Schengen area.

The flows of daily labour commuting show an important connection with the neighbouring Gorizia, and relatively strong daily flows to the area of Ljubljana. However, despite the

² Sergio Zilli, Medardo al confine orientale. Gorizia, Nova Gorica e la "nuova " Europa, in *Studi in onore di Giovanni Miccoli*, 2004, pages 479-499

³ Nika Vodopivec, Language practices, ideologies, and planning in the cross-border area of Nova Gorica and Gorizia, PhD thesis, University of Trieste, 2007/2008, Prof. Giorgia Osti.

administrative divisions, the Nova Gorica and Gorizia conurbation is becoming increasingly connected. In the cross border urban area residents are free to use educational services, health services, recreational and leisure activities, cultural offer, and choose their place of residence. In cooperation, municipalities are developing services that enable residents to overcome administrative, linguistic, and cultural barriers in the cross-border area.

Gorizia has developed as an industrial area for the entire region since the end of 1800. Until a couple of decades ago, the industry was the leading sector of the urban economic growth. A recent ISTAT study⁴ includes the whole Gorizia county in the first group of Italian provinces, named "rich and industrious Italy". It is described as a very urbanised area, with low levels of tertiary enterprises but considerable percentages of jobs in the industrial sector, high employment rates, a marginal position of the agriculture and an essential role of the large-scale retail trade. Moreover, the *Study Centre of the Unioncamere*⁵ has reported for Gorizia a higher rank of infrastructure assets than the Italian average - except for the motorway, which should be improved considering the exceptional increase in goods and people traffic, sanitary structures and education services.

Nevertheless, the position of Gorizia as main attractor for the Soča - Isonzo and Vipava - Vipacco valley is increasingly being questioned. The main reason is the weakening of internal and external (mainly Slovenian) demand, worsened by the fierce competitiveness of new large-scale retail trade attractors in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region. A contraction of the demand is observed also for the manufacturing industry and receptive structures in the touristic sector. Indeed, despite the increase in traffic, mainly of goods, and substantial investments, tourism has not seen any significant upsurge. Considering the overall weakening of economic activities, the growth of the employed and the labour force has been substantially interrupted. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is the demographic fabric of the city of Gorizia that is getting older and older. The area is already suffering the consequences of this situation, for instance, through a streamlining of hospital services which are increasingly turning towards health care. There is more at stake, since the progressive reduction of working-age population and employment eventually causes a reduction of consumes and tax revenues, triggering a vicious circle with negative effects.

Governance system

In Slovenia, national-level institutions are in charge of developing and implementing strategies, laws, and regulations. The Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 represents the state's core development framework as set out in the Vision of Slovenia. Other strategic and policy documents support the national implementation of the Cohesion policy. Operational programmes include the Rural Development Programme of the Republic of Slovenia (2014-2020), the Operational Programme for Cohesion Policy implementation (2014-2020) and the Operational Programme for support from the European maritime and fisheries fund in the Republic of Slovenia (2014-2020).

Figure 3: Slovenian Development Strategy provides framework for developing sectoral and other implementation documents

⁴ Go.L.D. Observatory

⁵ <http://www.unioncamere.gov.it/>



Source: Slovenian Development Strategy

There are no regional administrative bodies of governance. Nevertheless, the four Regional Development Agencies prepare development programmes on the regional level. These are: ROD, PRC, ICRA and RRA Nova Gorica. They all together take care of the implementation of general development in the region and the provision of professional, technical and administrative support for the operation of the two decision-making bodies in the region: the Council of the Regions and the Regional Development Council, that develop among others the Regional Development Program of the Northern Primorska region (Goriška development region).

In Slovenia, municipalities are local self - government bodies and as such an equal partner of the State. They are governed by three independent bodies – a mayor, a municipal council, and a supervisory committee.

The organisation chart of administration in the City Municipality of Nova Gorica is organised as follows; the Mayor represents and leads the Municipality under supervision of the Supervisory Committee, with a support of Vice Mayors, Mayor’s Cabinet and Director’s Office which is further divided into three departments: Social Activities, Economy and Public Services and Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Infrastructure.

The city municipality defines and implements the Municipal Spatial Plan of Nova Gorica. The related and specific programmes at the local level have to be coherent with regional and national policies and strategies. The city municipality also adopted a Sustainable Urban Strategy. The Municipality of Gorizia is one of the four provinces of the autonomous region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia (hereinafter: FVG). In Italy, the jurisdiction of the autonomous regions in terms of taxation allows retaining a higher share of locally raised tax revenues (around 70%) and the regional FVG government retains some competences of local government supervision that in other non-autonomous regions of Italy are allocated to the national state. Based on these prerogatives, the FVG region has autonomously chosen to substitute the four provinces (a layer of government recently abolished throughout Italy) with 18 Inter-Municipal Territorial Unions (UTIs). The Regional Law 26/20146 states that: “The Inter-Municipal Territorial Unions are local bodies with legal personality, having the nature of unions of municipalities, established by the regional law for the coordinated exercise of municipal, supra-municipal and wide-area functions

and services, as well as for territorial, economic and social development.”⁶ Gorizia together with other 14 municipalities are part of the UTI Collio - Alto Isonzo that has as amongst its goals:

- the valorisation of the territory, and its economic and social development
- the coordination between municipals, supra-municipal and wide-area functions and services; the rationalisation of the administrative management, through adequate effectiveness and efficiency of the project activities.
- the improvement and cohesion of the qualitative levels of essential services and facilities for citizens;
- the protection and valorisation of recognised linguistic minorities and specific historical, cultural, and linguistic identities, as well as local traditions and cultures;
- the preservation and sustainable management of natural resources and assets;
- the development of cross-border cooperation.

As for the latter, cross-border cooperation was initially suspended following the independence of Slovenia and relaunched in the late 1990s. Actually, the two towns have been engaged in cooperation projects since 2001, covering higher education, urban planning, transport, and management of the watercourses separating the two towns. An EGTC was established in 2011 in order to strengthen the local cooperation of the twin cities. The system of joint governance is composed of three central bodies:

- The Assembly consisting of seven representatives of Gorizia municipality (IT), five from Nova Gorica municipality (SI) and two from Šempeter–Vrtojba (SI), all of whom are elected for four years. The assembly examines and formally approves decisions, and its powers include the definition of common strategic orientations, approval of the budget, revenue, and accounts.
- The Director, appointed by the assembly for four years, takes care of the technical management of the EGTC. Director’s duties include the formulation of policy directions, management of the EGTC’s activities, planning of projects and ensuring the conformity of projects with EU objectives.
- The President is the legal representative of the EGTC This position, together with the vice-president one, is occupied alternately by either a Slovenian or an Italian representative – each for two years over the four years of the elected assembly operation

These three administrative organs are supported by two permanent sectoral commissions that work on transport and energy and an accounting commission that identifies legal obstacles to cooperation linked to the differences between the Italian and Slovenian legislation.

1.2 Rationale for selecting the case study

The Nova Gorica-Gorizia case study is characterised by significant regional features that influence the development of specific pathways for territorial integration:

⁶ Art. 5 of Regional Law 12 December 2014, n. 26 - Reorganisation of the Local Region-Autonomy system in Friuli Venezia Giulia. Ordinance of Inter-Municipal Territorial Unions and reallocation of administrative functions.

- the possibility of reshaping local identities thanks to the progressive weakening of divisions and barriers between the two nations and two cultures;
- the need to reinvigorate the local economies, breaking up common barriers as administrative asymmetries and legal obstacles;
- the abundance of natural capital, which intrinsically demands joint management of ecosystems.

The fact that the boundary and barriers between the two nations and three cultures have recently become more permeable attracts a conspicuous number of initiatives and investments to strengthen cross-border cooperation and improve the Quality of Life in Nova Gorica/Gorizia:

- **Integrated Territorial Investments**, constitute a vital implementation tool for the area, whose development strategy is based on the following pillars:
 - Capitalisation of the experiences and outcomes of previous Italy – Slovenia cross border programmes in order to ensure the highest efficiency and effectiveness of public investments;
 - Revitalisation of the “border based” economy by supporting its reconversion to new cross-border initiatives;
 - Improvement of residents quality of life by fostering the use of joint cross-border services.
- The **Isonzo-Soča cross-border nature park** preserves and enhances the natural and cultural heritage of the cross-border area along the river Isonzo, to increase its attractiveness from a tourist and recreational point of view and to improve the usability of the area for citizens.
- **Building a cross-border healthcare network** is a pilot strategy of integration of the services and health facilities involved, which intends to create a system based on the existing excellence in the two territories.
- The **candidature and nomination for European Capital of Culture 2025** by the Municipality of Nova Gorica is a unique opportunity to connect through cultural engagement all the potentials of the two border cities and the territory, with regard to the touristic, cultural, economic, training and infrastructure aspects. This promises to foster economic development and investment in the area, attracting cultural tourists as well as improving the quality of life of present and future inhabitants.

Currently, the two bordering regions show significant differences in terms of Quality of Life⁷. A comparative analysis of the Friuli Venezia Giulia and Zahodna Slovenija regions (NUTS 2 regions which include respectively Gorizia and Nova Gorica) has been conducted, analysing the results provided by EU- Social Progress Index (EU-SPI). In the EU-SPI, Zahodna Slovenija is ranked 57th, while the GDP (in PPP) of Friuli Venezia Giulia is 4.000€ higher than in the Slovenian region. The most significant divergence is in term of Foundations of Wellbeing, as the process of convergence has just begun.

The main challenges are now improving cooperation in the fields of planning and socio-economic development (e.g. energy, transport, ICT), in sustainable development (alternative energy sources, developing more sustainable transport systems, water management) and in

⁷ The cross border dimension is explicitly tackled in the Interreg V-A (2015) Cooperation programme and a United Nations - Economic and Social Council (2015) study on the Assessment of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in the Isonzo/Soča River Basin

public service provision. These challenges have been analysed in the Interreg VA programme, providing funding for cross-border projects.

However, the current cross-border joint governance activities are still rather limited. Indeed, the ESPON Cross-border Public Services (CPS) targeted funding supported only two cross-border public services in 2018:

- CPS for environmental protection established by a local agreement and operated in a network,
- CPS for job placement services determined by a European directive and managed through a regional legal entity.

Both CPSs do not have a local office, weakening the entire process of cooperation and development of this cross-border territory. Summing up, the Nova Gorica/Gorizia case study can highlight new opportunities for managing QoL in the cross-border context, by developing joint cooperation programmes, management strategies and services.

The common Territorial Quality of Life framework and coding system will be compared with the territorial analysis of QoL related aspects and indicators performed so far separately for Gorizia in Italy and Nova Gorica in Slovenia.

The aim will be to test the framework as a common tool to produce comparable QoL measurements and indicators in the twin cities, as well as to identify the data gaps and recommend further QoL measurement and monitoring efforts apt to deliver an exhaustive and harmonised picture across the border. Special emphasis – in this respect – will be given to cross-border flows and their effects on the quality of life of the citizens living on the two sides of the border. Another special issue will concern the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the quality of life, which was magnified in the cross-border area by the closing of the national border between Italy and Slovenia, now splitting the area into two separate cities again.

1.3 Sources

In addition to the document sources listed in footnotes, the following persons were interviewed to guide the writing of this case study report:

- two representatives of the Regional Development Agency PRC, implemented in Nova Gorica,
- one representative of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020, managed by the Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, Trieste, Italy, and its info branch in Štanjel,
- one representative of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation GO.
- four representatives of the Municipality of Nova Gorica.
- three representatives of the Municipality of Gorizia.

2 Policy context

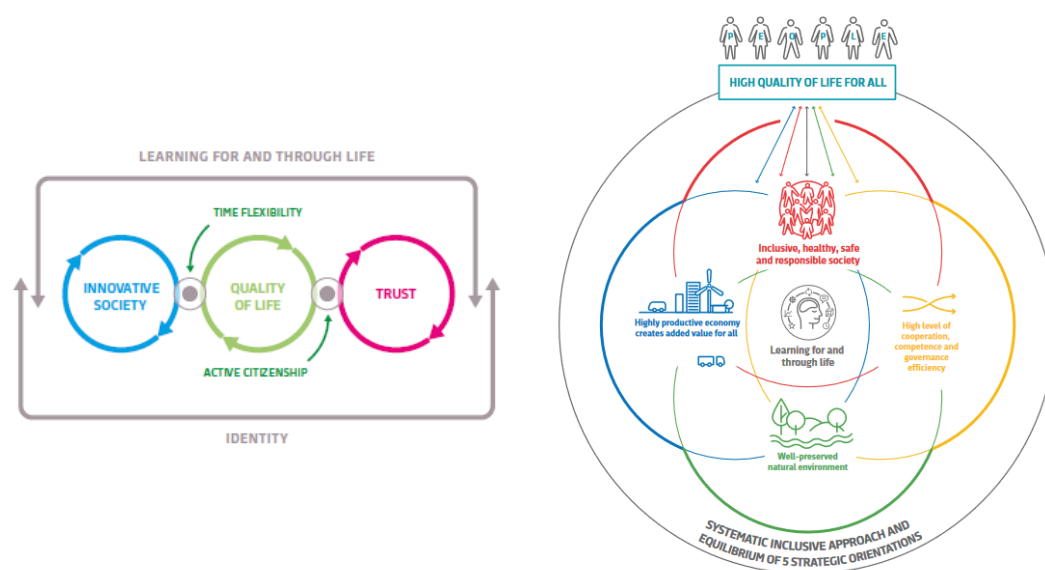
2.1 Outline of the QoL concept

2.1.1 QoL concept in Nova Gorica

A QoL measurement framework in Slovenia has not been established yet. Nevertheless, the quality of life is an important part of strategic documents on all administrative levels. How the quality of life is incorporated into key policy documents and how it is being monitored is examined further below.

The **Slovenian Development Strategy 2030** is the core development framework adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in 2017. It is based on the guidelines set out in the document Vision of Slovenia. The primary objective of the strategy is to provide a high quality of life for all. This can be achieved through balanced economic, social, and environmental development considering the planetary boundaries and creating good life conditions and opportunities for present and future generations. At the level of the individual, a high quality of life is manifested in good opportunities for employment, education and creativity, in a dignified, safe and active life, a healthy and clean environment and inclusion in democratic decision-making and participation in social management.

Figure 4: Strategic orientations for achieving high quality of life



Source: Slovenian Development Strategy

The State strategic orientations for achieving a high quality of life are:

- A highly productive economy creating value added for all,
- Lifelong learning,
- An inclusive, healthy, safe, and responsible society,
- A preserved healthy natural environment and
- A high level of cooperation, training, and effective governance.

Slovenia's development is monitored by issuing yearly a Development Report, released by the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development. The report illustrates the trends of 19 economic indicators, 8 lifelong learning indicators, 21 indicators of inclusive, healthy, safe, and responsible society, 14 environmental indicators, and 8 governance indicators.

The **Spatial Planning Strategy of Slovenia 2050** – still in the preparation phase - is a strategic national document delivering long-term strategic goals for the country and directions for the development of spatial planning activities. More in detail, the strategy sets five goals:

- Rational and efficient spatial development,
- Competitiveness of Slovenian cities,
- Strengthening spatial identity and multifunctionality,
- Resilience and adaptability to change,
- Quality of life in urban and rural areas.

For achieving the latter goal, three priorities are defined:

- Increasing the attractiveness of cities to live in,
- Integrated functional regeneration of the settlements and
- Improving the vitality and attractiveness of the rural areas.

In addition, the strategy recommends four indicators to monitor Quality of life in urban and rural areas, of which:

- two for monitoring the green areas:
 - Access to public (publicly accessible) green areas in size of at least 2 ha at up to 300 m;
 - Share of public and green areas in the settlement (for urban settlements) with objective of at least 40% of the regulatory area of the settlements.
- and two for monitoring the sustainable mobility:
 - Share of population within a radius of 1 km from the public passenger transport station with sufficient and adequate frequency with objective of increasing the trend;
 - Number of passenger cars per 100 inhabitants in the municipality with objective of decreasing trend.
 -

The **National Housing Programme for 2015-2025** defines an active housing policy through which the state contributes to achieving targets defined in its development, spatial planning and social development programmes. It includes an operative document aimed at enhancing the options for the solution of citizens' housing needs, namely:

- Activation of the existing housing stock
- Better accessibility of housing
- Renovation of the housing stock
- Building new housing in areas where there is the greatest need

It focuses particularly on providing a good quality of life for vulnerable population groups by considering their specific needs.

The **Active Ageing Strategy** has been adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. The goals for the implementation of the strategy, based on the present situation and changes in the demographic structure of the population include:

- Well-being for all generations, fair and safe living in the home environment with a high level of human rights.
- Participation of all generations in economic, social, and cultural life in accordance with their wishes and needs, more intergenerational exchanges.
- Preservation and improvement of the physical and mental health of people of all ages.

By implementing these development goals, Slovenia will contribute to enhancing the population well-being and quality of life, with an emphasis on intergenerational cooperation and raising awareness on the importance of high-quality ageing (“Ageing Well”).

It is important to note that – although addressed by the strategy throughout Slovenia - the ageing population will be one of the major challenges that the Municipality of Nova Gorica will have to cope with in the future.

The **Regional development plan of Severna Primorska 2014-2020** calls for having effectively managed, dynamic, and creative regions with their own identity, which are able to recognise and exploit global development opportunities. Regional development will be based on economic efficiency, social justice, and environmental responsibility.

The promotion of balanced regional development aims:

- to increase economic, environmental, and social capital in development regions and their efficiency in terms of economic competitiveness, quality of life and sustainable use of natural resources,
- to eliminate structural problems in disadvantaged areas and reduce their development lag,
- to realise and increase the developmental potential of Slovenian regions through international cooperation.

Accordingly, the Regional development plan of Severna Primorska 2014-2020 defines three priorities:

- Raising competitiveness, innovation, and employment opportunities in the region,
- Improving the quality of life and
- Sustainable, environmental, spatial, and infrastructural development of the region.

Within the improving quality of life priority, three measures and six activities are defined with related baseline and target values of indicators for monitoring the implementation:

- Improving the living conditions for individual categories of the population,
- Preservation and development of tangible and intangible heritage and
- Ensuring appropriate housing conditions.

The indicators for monitoring include the number of programmes in the social and healthcare field and the number of investments for improving the housing conditions in the region.

The **Municipal Spatial Plan of the City of Nova Gorica** – adopted by the City Council in 2012 - aims to generate growth and enhance social well-being and the freedom of individuals while preserving the environment, landscape diversity and natural resources by promoting and directing spatial development. The plan however does not set explicit objectives with measurable indicators for the quality of life. The impact of the Municipal Spatial Plan is evaluated using measurable indicators in the Environmental Report that are set to assess the impact of the plan. The objectives of the Municipal Spatial Plan are also being implemented through different strategies and plans: Sustainable Urban Strategy, Strategic Accessibility Plan of Nova Gorica, Integrated Transport Strategy of Nova Gorica, Local Energy Concept and others.

2.1.2 QoL concept in Gorizia

Some elements and dimensions of the Territorial Quality of Life for Gorizia can be found in the sustainable development strategies at national (Italy), regional (Friuli Venezia Giulia), and local (Gorizia municipality) levels, and in the related system of well-being and sustainability (BES) monitoring indicators. The latter is based on a national survey administered by ISTAT, with a

level of territorial detail which allows delivering comprehensive and comparable results aggregated for the 20 NUTS2 regions in Italy (including Friuli Venezia Giulia), and for some BES dimensions also for the NUTS3 level (including the Gorizia province and city).

The **National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS)** is coordinated by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in close collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment that evaluates the related actions and results through a set of indicators in line with the well-being and sustainability (BES) monitoring system. The Italian NSDS has been structured on five dimensions: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. Each dimension consists of strategic and systematic priorities defined by specific objectives according to the Italian context and complementary to SDGs. The national strategy also provides a set of *sustainability vectors*, i.e. crosscutting and transversal areas of action for guiding and managing the integration of the SDGs into national policies, plans and projects. The following figure describes the strategic priorities per dimension while arrows identify sustainability vectors. The specific objectives per strategic priority are strongly interrelated as a result of a multi-level consultation process to synthesise the Italian position concerning SDGs, as well as the existing strengths and weaknesses.

Figure 5 Italian National Sustainable Development Strategy framework



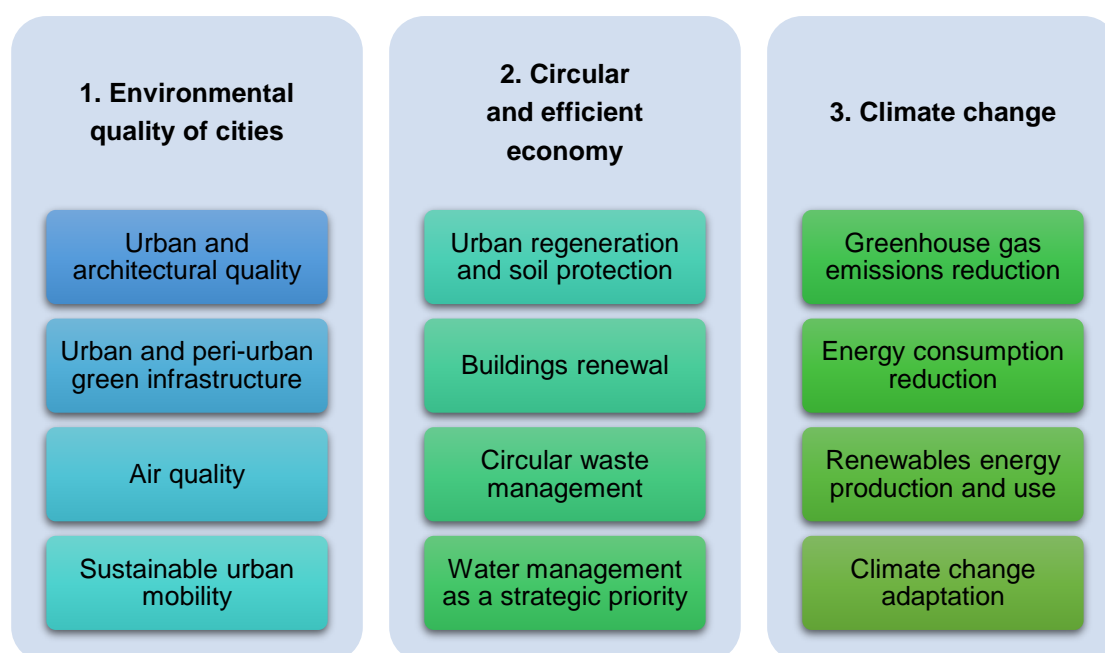
Source: own elaboration

Friuli Venezia Giulia started recently the process to draft the **Regional Sustainable Development Strategy**, led by the environmental councillor in collaboration with the Regional Environmental Protection Agency and the Foundation of Sustainable Development that is also the coordinator of the Green City Network. The regional strategy adopts the Green City as a framework to define its policy measures and infrastructure investments in order to address the SDGs and cope with climate change effects. The Green City approach has been implemented by several European institutions, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development that defines Green a city that:

- Preserves or improves the quality of its environmental assets (air, water, land, soil, and biodiversity) and uses these resources sustainably
- Mitigates and adapts to the risks of climate change
- Ensures that environmental policies contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of residents⁸.

Based on these qualifying points, the strategic document determines three priority areas, twelve guidelines and related specific actions to implement, as synthesised in the figure below. The *regional strategy for green city* completes the available tools and local initiatives already implemented, highlighting problems to be solved and opportunities⁹.

Figure 6 Regional strategy for green city - priority areas and guidelines



Source: own elaboration

The process underlying these strategic decisions is based on mapping the best practices and projects present in the territory, and the consultation of municipal authorities to understand the

⁸ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Green City Action Plan methodology, London, UK, 2016, page 4.

⁹ For further information, please consult the following document: <https://www.greencitynetwork.it/wp-content/uploads/Strategia-regionale-per-le-green-city.pdf>

situation of green city dimensions. The analysis highlights positive results for the Municipality of Gorizia that has the highest availability of public green areas per capita of the region (136,7 m²/inhabitant) and significantly higher than the national average. On the other hand, worrying remarks have been reported on water management and the mobility sectors. On the former, the losses of municipal water supply networks are considerable high, around 40%, even if the consumption of water is slightly decreased. On the latter, the number of cars per one thousand inhabitants is slightly higher than the national average (624). Still, the demand for public transport is decreasing, although it is already one of the lowest in the region, and pedestrian areas are not reaching significant dimensions (0,27 m²/inhabitant). The cycling condition of Gorizia is not the best one, even if they have a bike-sharing service, the total length of cycling lanes is extremely low: only 9 km.

2.2 Evolution of the QoL approach

The UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development is the main driver of the territorial development strategies both in Italy and Slovenia and at lower scale as well, in the Gorizia and Nova Gorica area and surroundings. Nowadays, the achievement of the SDGs is a common policy framework suitable for fostering Territorial Quality of Life across the cross-border region as well.

Before 2015, the regional, national, and European policies were strongly characterised instead by the economic dimension, having as goals GDP growth, competitiveness and the efficient management of productive assets. The regional and local policies were mostly focused on income support schemes and measures for bolstering the labour market and workers mobility. Some analyses suggest that cross-border labour migration was the main factor for transnational cooperation and integration¹⁰.

Indeed, the main general objective of the Operational Programme Italy-Slovenia 2007-2013 was to enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of the programme-area (on the Slovenian territory, Goriška, Gorenjska, Obalno-kraška; on the Italian territory, the Provinces of Udine, Gorizia, Trieste, Venezia, Padova, Rovigo, Ferrara and Ravenna). This objective has been implemented through the following specific goals:

- Ensure sustainable territorial integration.
- Increase competitiveness and development of a knowledge-based society.
- Improve communication, social and cultural cooperation, also to remove persisting barriers.
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme.

After 2015, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the European, national, and regional policies focused increasingly on social and environmental issues. In this process of harmonisation between national and regional policies of the two nations, the cross-border city of Nova Gorica-Gorizia obviously plays a key role. The strong presence of European programmes on the territory has decisively sped up the process of policy integration and of cohesion on both sides of the border, with the aim of promoting the well-being and increasing the quality of life of citizens in the cross-border area. This goal is pursued through the following principles of action:

- Recognising the competitive advantage of the cooperative process aimed at strengthening economic and social cohesion at the territorial level.

¹⁰ Interact, Cross-border and transnational labour market integration, 2015, page 62.

- Encouraging the political sharing of strategies for the management of the cross-border area and the implementation of joint projects.
- Ensuring the dialogue to co-create territorial planning both for the urban area and the surrounding natural environment.
- Favouring the development of tourism in the area also through the joint promotion of the territory and its cultural resources and heritage.
- Supporting the dissemination of culture as an indispensable tool for mutual knowledge and respect.

The strategic coordination of the policies related to territorial development prioritises the following fields:

- Implementation and modernisation of a sustainable mobility system by jointly managing transportation services, including intermodal logistic nodes in the metropolitan area.
- Management of local energy and environmental resources, including the joint planning of energy service for the metropolitan area.

The lengthy process to build joint governance of the cross-border area is yielding results. The administrations of Nova Gorica and Gorizia are increasingly planning joint strategies and projects to outline a shared path of territorial development, characterised by principles of Europeanism, sustainability, and inclusivity (see section 2.3).

The conceptualisation and measurement of QoL, comparable to our framework, have been developed disproportionately by the two countries. On the Slovenian side, the first attempt has been made within the process of drafting the Regional Development Program 2021-2027 for Slovenian regions where a set of indicators has been developed to measure QoL aspects at the regional level. On the other side, the report on equitable and sustainable well-being (BES) that comprehensively describes Gorizia's QoL has been institutionalised in Italy with law no. 163/2016. The document is not just a statistical publication, but a line of research that establishes a process to engage local authorities, where the multidimensionality of well-being is a starting point for improving society as a whole. Every year, an extensive set of indicators is updated and analysed, contributing to the definition and evaluation of the economic policies of all Italian provinces. The publication investigates trends and forecasts relating to the 4 BES indicators, as determined by a high-level committee¹¹, and analyses the most current trends for other BES indicators.

2.3 Cross- border governance and the use of QoL in the policy context

In the functional area of Nova Gorica – Gorizia, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC GO) plays a crucial role in leading the development at the cross-border level. The EGTC GO is currently the only legal instrument offering the following possibilities:

- shaping a shared strategy of urban development;
- bringing forward the needs of the three communities (Nova Gorica, Gorizia and Šempeter – Vrtojba) through an assembly of representatives and thus avoiding any of the three cities to have a predominant role;

¹¹ including the highest representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), the Bank of Italy and two renowned experts.

- capitalising the outcomes of past cooperation and ensuring continuity;
- operating across the entire cross-border area regardless of municipal borders.

In the beginning, while setting up the operational context for the implementation of Interreg Projects in the area, the national management and control systems of both countries, Italy and Slovenia, were not yet ready to put in practice the 2014-2020 regulatory framework for EGTCs acting as a unique beneficiary. After the strong commitment of both Managing Authority and DG Regio, the EGTC GO has been recognised as the only beneficiary that will implement the common strategy. The unique beneficiary model represents the most advanced kind of cross-border cooperation, consolidating the new concept of territorial integration. The EGTC GO is indeed the only entity with territorial authority in the cross-border area that can:

- coordinate the institutions that are implementing the programme,
- integrate the managing mechanisms through the multiple levels of governance,
- facilitate partnerships with Italian and Slovenian stakeholders involved in the promotion of the territory, and
- inform citizens about project development.

Transparency, dialogue, common ways to communicate, a clear organisational structure, and well-defined roles and responsibilities are clearly key elements to implement political aspirations and policy goals in this complex cross-border system of governance. The followed projects, hereby briefly described, have been selected due to their significative contribution in improving the territorial quality of life and mechanisms of cross-border governance between the two municipalities.

The **ITI Salute-Zdravsto** project construction of a network of cross-border health services¹² aims at improving the use and the performance of social and health services within the cross-border territory of the EGTC GO, by integrating the services and health facilities involved in the project. The project includes the constitution of a network made up of excellences from both territories, considering the needs of citizens and the need to renew these services in order to have an efficient system that ensures the universal right to healthcare. The project includes the establishment of three cross-border medical teams in the field of mental health, autism and pregnancy, and the creation of a single centre for the booking of social and health services shared by Italian and Slovenian health facilities. The project also investigates solutions for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in order to integrate social assistance services.

Related to the conceptual framework and impacts on quality of life, the project has a strong impact on the subdomain Health – care within the personal QoL enablers domain. Consequently, the project impact will reflect on the QoL outcomes pillar. The improvement of the subdomain Personal Health Indicators within the Personal Health and safety domain will be achieved.

The goals of **ITI Isonzo-Soča**¹³ project are the conservation, protection, recovery and development of the natural and cultural heritage of the cross-border area along the Isonzo-Soča river, as a homogeneous tourist and recreational destination. The Isonzo-Soča project aims at “giving back” the river to the cities, encouraging citizens to take advantage of the territory crossed by the river. Ideally, this goal will be reached through a series of works that

¹² <https://euro-go.eu/en/programmi-e-progetti/progetti-iti-salute-zdravstvo/>

¹³ <https://euro-go.eu/en/programmi-e-progetti/progetti-iti-isonzo-so%C4%8D/>

will increase the value of the area by improving its accessibility. These works will also increase the number of tourists by making the area more suitable for tourism, through the construction of a cross-border network of walking and cycling routes that will constitute a cross-border urban park, which will also improve sustainable mobility for the area's inhabitants. Consequently, the area will become more attractive for citizens and tourists, and this will positively impact the area's economy. Furthermore, a communication campaign will promote the territory as a new tourist destination.

Specifically, the project aims to construct a cross-border network of cycle and pedestrian paths along the Isonzo river and along the state border that connects Salcano to Šempeter-Vrtojba in the territories of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba.

Related to the conceptual framework and impacts on quality of life, the project has an impact on the subdomains Transport, Public spaces, and Cultural assets within the personal Socio-economic QoL enablers domain. Especially the strong impact can be expected on the Green infrastructure and Protected areas subdomains within the Ecological QoL enablers domain. Consequently, the project impact will be reflected in the QoL outcomes pillar. A direct or indirect impact on the subdomains Healthy Economy indicators, Healthy Society indicators and Healthy Environment Indicators can be expected.

The **Integrated Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan**¹⁴ of the cross-border region of Nova Gorica - Gorizia was developed within the PUMAS project (Planning sustainable regional-Urban Mobility in the Alpin Space). A Vision of an Optimally Connected Region¹⁵ guided the development of the Integrated Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) drawn up by Nova Gorica, Gorizia and five other municipalities. The SUMP consists of five strategic pillars:

- Establishment of integrated transport planning, including the needs of vulnerable groups
- Promotion of walking as a daily travel mode, introduction of new reduced speed traffic zones.
- Creation of conditions for optimal exploitation of cycling potential, especially in Gorizia.
- Development of attractive public transport.
- Shift car users' habits by introducing electrically powered vehicles.

The **Cyclewalk Project**¹⁶ is an ongoing Interreg project that aims at supporting the shift from car usage to cycling and walking mobility patterns over shorter distances, improving accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. EGTC GO is one of the partners in the project, contributing to the transition to a more sustainable alternative for urban mobility and tourism by introducing quality criteria for proper planning of walking and cycling infrastructures.

The EGTC GO proposal **CB Pump - Cross-border Public Urban Mobility Plan**¹⁷ aims at identifying sustainable solutions to the removal of obstacles hindering the integration of urban transport networks. Moreover, it will mobilise relevant actors at the local, regional, and national level to conclude a cooperation agreement to set up new cross-border bus lines within the target area. It will also make it possible to treat the border area shared by the three cities as a

¹⁴ <https://www.nova-gorica.si/projekti/2013081315272237/>

¹⁵ <https://www.nova-gorica.si/projekti/2013081315272237/>

¹⁶ <https://www.interregeurope.eu/cyclewalk/news/>

¹⁷ <https://euro-go.eu/en/programmi-e-progetti/progetto-cp-pump/>

single urban system and, accordingly, to make a distinction between international commercial bus lines and cross-border bus lines, which are more similar to local public bus services.

Related to the conceptual framework and impacts on the quality of life, Integrated SUMP, Cyclewalk and CB Pump projects have an impact on the subdomains Transport, Consumption and Public spaces within the personal Socio-economic QoL enablers domain. Consequently, the project impact will be reflected in the QoL outcomes pillar. Direct or indirect impacts on the subdomains Personal Health Indicators and Healthy Environment Indicators can be expected.

GO! 2025 project - European Capital of Culture is a bold initiative that addresses the underlying issues and dynamics of cooperation and social integration in Nova Gorica and Gorizia, and which represents the beginning of independent joint governance. The candidacy for European Capital of Cultural has been carried out by both municipalities - Nova Gorica and Gorizia – is an evident achievement of the European programme to promote cross-border governance and a more cohesive socio-economic fabric. The project, whose slogan is GO! Borderless aims to tear down social, linguistic, cultural, economic, administrative, and ethnic borders and create an urban space that brings citizens together in a unified city. The project includes an integrated line of actions linked to long-term strategies to improve the quality of life in the entire area. The cultural sector wants to become a leading economic activity able to attract private investments and youth workers. Nova Gorica and Gorizia are conceptualising an innovative strategy to build a creative industry hub and a cultural start-up incubator. The economic opportunity generated will also impact the wine and food sector, as territorial oenological and gastronomic specialities will be enhanced by the region's culture and heritage in an integrated marketing campaign to increase tourism. The project will activate a scholarship programme, putting highly educated youth at the heart of the strategy in order to ensure a smooth transition to the labour market in the cultural sector. The cultural and language learning activities of the project will be key drivers for intergenerational communication, psychological well-being, and social integration. The final aim is to improve the quality of life within the entire urban area, transforming Nova Gorica and Gorizia into an attractive place for young people, reversing current demographic and economic trends.

2.3.1 Governance and QoL during the COVID-19 sanitary crisis

The Covid-19 sanitary crisis, especially national decisions to close the border between Slovenia and Italy, has triggered an incredible spirit of unity between the two municipalities. The temporary reintroduction of the frontier has interrupted the smoothness of the communication and cooperation between administrations, interfering with the process of jointly planning of the metropolitan area. The two mayors sat down in Transalpine square with a desk divided by the border, continuing the dialogue for managing the twin city. The gesture was a strong political message to both national governments, and Brussels, whose European spirit faltered during the crisis. The mayors claimed the central role of territories in building the *Europe of people*, demanding the dialogue at the national level to harmonise decisions on the cross-border area. It was not a mere political issue, but a concrete problem since the only crossing place open was the highway link where pedestrians and cyclists were not allowed to pass. Even if foreseen by both Italian and Slovenian laws, people were not permitted to bring food and assistance to parents on the other side of the border. The lack of protocols to operate synergistically during emergencies is a recurrent problem in this territory characterised by increasing exposure to the risks and impacts of climate change. The means of communication and joint management of the territory have to be further developed to avoid that the periods of crisis amplify the divisions among the population. Despite this, there were many demonstrations of affection by both countries, and the separation allowed the need for common governance of the territory to emerge even more loudly.

As part of the candidacy for European Capital of Cultural 2025, EGTC GO has organised Italian and Slovene language online courses to facilitate the interaction of cross-border citizens. The support to parents of children with autism spectrum disorders was guaranteed by the Salute-Zdravstvo Project through specialised online courses for Italian and Slovenian experts. Fortunately, the physiological activities for pregnant women were launched before the lockdown, and they were moved online to keep supporting future mothers with necessary services. The COVID 19 crisis has severely stressed out the public service system, especially in the health sector, but on the other hand, has significantly reduced emissions of most pollutants into the environment, particularly in the air. The Regional Agency for the Protection of the Environment in Friuli Venezia Giulia has monitored a remarkable improvement of air quality in the territory¹⁸, proving that virtuous acts for reducing polluting emissions have rapid effects.

2.4 Success factors and obstacles

Both countries face challenges regarding the coordination of integrated strategies and plans, mainly due to the lack of a joint and longstanding governance structure able to harmonise internal policies and decision processes with the principles of monitoring ex-ante goals and targets.

There are several structural obstacles that have to be overcome in order to implement cross-border projects concretely. One of the most impactful bottlenecks is the diverging national, regional, and local legislations that hamper a synergistic planning and smooth operability. The incomparability of skills in all areas related to Quality of Life hinders the timeliness of joint actions and the efficient implementation of programs. The principal problem is related to the management of the municipal budget. The municipality of Nova Gorica has to define its investments at the beginning of the year without being able to change them. In contrast, the city of Gorizia can define new spending lines during the entire year, also because the Gorizia council is an entirely political body while only the mayor of Nova Gorica is a political figure, supported by technical councillors. There are also diverse national and regional business legislations that slow down economic growth and the development of cross-border business activities. For example, in Slovenia, taxation is lower and exists a policy to calm and establish prices. The timing for opening a business is faster, as well as the control procedures are more streamlined than in Italy. Besides, Nova Gorica has higher tax retention in terms of applicable rate than in Gorizia. This problem emerges from complex funding systems, frequent changes in domestic business legislation and an asymmetric cooperation scheme that prevents constructive and continuous dialogue.

In this context, it has not been possible to develop a systematic and structured measurement of the Quality of Life at the municipal level for both Gorizia and Nova Gorica, despite many indicators that could provide a measure of the quality of life are being monitored by separate strategies and programme. One main problem – common to both sides of the city - is that detailed data are often not publicly available, and then a warehouse where collect indicators set within different projects has not been developed. Moreover, indicators within different projects are being monitored only during the implementation phase, as shown by the lack of factual data and outcome indicators in the thematic report on the cross-border cooperation between Italy and Slovenia¹⁹. The absence of a process to monitor projects and policies impacts does not allow to collect enough information for gauging trends systematically and

¹⁸ http://www.arpa.fvg.it/cms/tema/aria/notizie/2020/news/notizia0019_2020.html

¹⁹ published in May 2020

enabling comparison over time. Another significant data gap concerns the lack of a subjective perspective on the quality of life since a joint survey at the municipal level has never been realised. This information, together with the experience acquired during the implementation of projects, would feed a better flow of communication and knowledge exchange between municipalities to bolster planning and cooperation processes.

The issue of cross border governance is changing from one of the major obstacles of this territory to a significant case of success. The work of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation is a best practice recognised both internationally and by all local stakeholders. The EGTC GO acting as the sole beneficiary has proven to provide an efficient and reliable framework for fostering the territorial cohesion and the development of a wide variety of projects in meaningful fields for the Quality of Life of the cross-border area. The effectiveness and efficiency of projects have been ensured despite technical barriers and market conditions characterised by increasing variations and uncertainties. The EGTC GO has coordinated the first cases of joint and synergic planning, albeit only for specific projects in the health, mobility, and social service fields. Nevertheless, this practice is of extreme relevance as it can inspire and support the beginning of a joint planning procedure for the functional area. The projects implemented benefit the entire population, covering both the most peripheral areas and the most deprived and vulnerable social groups. There are some signals and seeds of “citizen-centred” participatory practice worth of mention. For instance, in the participatory budget framework, the Municipality of Nova Gorica ensures cooperation with local inhabitants and other interested stakeholders. In Gorizia, citizens’ suggestions can impact the development of the area if they are aligned with the development strategies and municipal spatial plans of the Municipality. However, these citizens participation experience are still episodic and do not cover all inhabitants, needs and problems, as well as current and future initiatives.

Cross-border cooperation would be – as mentioned – a crucial driver for improving the quality of life across the border both in Gorizia and Nova Gorica. The Quality of Life is defined as a priority area on both sides of the border, but separately for different territorial levels and by several institutions leading to a loss of coherence in the concept and measurement of the territorial QoL progresses. The EGTC GO is also acting on this aspect by attracting additional investment - albeit limited - to ensure the medium-long term sustainability of policies and strategies aimed at improving the territorial quality of life. This process is increasing and deepening daily cross-border collaboration and governance, generating the structural conditions to allow EGTC GO to act efficiently on all aspects related to the Quality of Life.

2.5 Achievements and further plans

The Thematic Report on cross-border cooperation between Italy and Slovenia²⁰, which evaluated in particular the ITI and EGTC GO projects and actions, highlighted significant achievements. The survey filled in by stakeholders of the EGTC GO target area indicated an improvement in communication between the municipalities, albeit in a context of fragmented interactions. Private and public institutions should invest in ICT tools to support smoother dialogue and information exchange between all territorial stakeholders. The data show patterns of positive reciprocal support between entities of the two countries, but the potential of joint governance has not been fully explored or exploited. Generally speaking, the work of EGTC GO, as well as that of Nova Gorica and Gorizia, in strengthening cross-border governance and joint planning of territorial development strategies has brought about remarkable and tangible improvements in citizens' quality of life.

²⁰ https://www.ita-slo.eu/sites/default/files/THEMATIC_REPORT_ITI_%20FINAL.PDF

Initial economies of scale have been created, allowing for the more efficient use of monetary resources despite constant and significant growth in the prices of goods and services as well as international competition. The overall management of projects has been considerably improved by harmonising costs and timing and increasing participatory local development. A multi-level governance approach has been implemented by merging social work and health care services. This model has already been applied in Italy and is under testing in Slovenia. The need for language courses and language mediation is essential to foster the integration and cooperation process across all strata of society. The success of the GO! 2025 project would represent an essential step towards solving this problem. A borderless society in a land of bloody battles would be an outstanding best practice, not only from a European perspective but also at the international level. Nova Gorica and Gorizia would be a unique case of cooperation, integration, and joint planning.

The future Slovenian plans for implementing QoL-related policies have been developed within the process of drafting the Regional Development Program 2021-2027. The document is prepared in line with Slovenian Development Strategy, as well as considering sectoral documents on the national level and the European Cohesion Policy 2021-2027. The four general regional policy objectives are:

- Objective 1: Increase the quality of life in all regions with balanced economic, social, and environmental development based on the principles of sustainable development;
- Objective 2: Development catch up with European regions;
- Objective 3: Reduction of regional development disparities;
- Objective 4: Achievement of development potentials and exploitation of global opportunities through international interregional integration and cooperation.

The realisation of the first objective will be monitored through twelve areas of quality of life: Work, Housing, Income, Health, Education, Social Exclusion, Environment, Space, Accessibility, Culture, Governance and Security that are directly related to the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 objectives.

For individual areas of quality of life, key indicators are selected as mandatory indicators for measuring regional policy objectives (one per each area of quality of life). Baseline data for the key indicators refer to the last year for which data are available. In addition to the key indicators, supplementary or explanatory indicators are used, if necessary, based on a discretionary choice of the regions and with the aim to monitor specific objectives of the regional development programs.

Table 3: The list of mandatory indicators for the monitoring of Quality of life as proposed to be established within Regional Development Programs 2021-2027 for Slovenian regions.

| Area of Quality of Life | Mandatory Indicator |
|-------------------------|---|
| Work | Working population rate |
| Housing | Housing deprivation rate |
| Income | Disposable income per capita |
| Health | Number of years one can expect to live in good health |
| Education | Share of population with tertiary education |
| Social Exclusion | At risk of social exclusion rate |

| Area of Quality of Life | Mandatory Indicator |
|-------------------------|--|
| Environment | Ecological footprint |
| Space | Number, area, and type of functionally degraded areas |
| Accessibility | Share of population within a radius of 1 km from the public passenger transport station with sufficient and adequate frequency |
| Culture | Number of visits to public libraries per capita |
| Governance | Participation in parliamentary elections |
| Security | Share of households reporting problems with crime, vandalism, or violence in their living environment |

By defining mandatory indicators that will be monitored in all the regions, it is possible to measure quality of life aspects with comparable data at the regional level. If it turns out to be a good practice, this could be as well used for lower administrative units – e.g. municipalities.

On the Italian side, in Friuli Venezia Giulia, strategic guidelines to implement the next Cohesion Policy set out the following objectives:

1. The enhancement of citizens' knowledge, skills, and capacities according to a **life-long learning** logic allows creating a learning region able to cope with the exponential change of society. Investment in human capital becomes a fundamental prerequisite to increase the innovation of the regional production system and to connect it to the world of research and universities by creating a structured ecosystem able to respond promptly to future challenges. The specific goals to reach this strategic object are:
 - Bolstering the skills of both young people and adults to select the best opportunities for study and training;
 - Improving opportunities for job placement, in particular for those target groups at higher risk of exclusion from the labour market;
 - Supporting the development of the leading sectors of the regional economy by a coherent training system.
2. The **regional economic recovery**, responding to global challenges that increasingly affect local development trends as well. The digital revolution, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, the energy transition and the circular economy are the main challenges that offer an extraordinary opportunity to boost the competitiveness of the regional system. Innovation and research projects should be developed in the framework of the Smart Specialization Strategy and aimed at the digitisation of production chains, in particular the health system and public administration. The territorial development should consider the Regional Sustainable Development Strategy (RSDS) and focus on logistics and energy sectors.
3. A **sustainable and inclusive development** capable of enhancing the resources of the territory and not focused exclusively on growth and competitiveness. In this respect, the integrated local development schemes should have a dual function: supporting the marginal territories, such as mountain and inner areas, and regenerating urban districts through the sustainable recovery of degraded suburbs. The actions to support marginal areas should focus on the protection and enhancement of local natural and cultural assets and the development of digital and smart mobility services to promote tourism and local economic activities. The actions to support urban areas, on the other hand,

should be developed within the framework of smart cities, urban regeneration processes, resilience to climate change, and revitalisation of historic centres as cultural attractions.

3 Measuring Quality of Life

3.1 Indicators and measurement

3.1.1 Measuring QoL in Nova Gorica

As the first attempt of measuring and monitoring the Quality of Life in Slovenian regions will be established within the context of the Regional Development Programmes 2021-2027. A total of 12 indicators have been developed and list in the following table, 10 indicators are disaggregated, and only two are composite (Ecological footprint and Share of population within a radius of 1 km from the public passenger transport station with sufficient and adequate frequency). The measuring will provide comparable data on the quality of life on a regional level. Still, currently there is not any systematic measurement of the quality of life neither on national nor municipal levels.

Table 4 The Regional Development Programmes 2021-2027 indicators

| Indicator | Data used | Type of indicator | Time scale | Territorial level |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Work | Working population rate | Disaggregated | 2005-2018 | NUTS 3, LAU 2 |
| Housing | Housing deprivation rate | Disaggregated | 2008-2017 | NUTS 3 |
| Income | Disposable income per capita | Disaggregated | 2000-2017 | NUTS 3 |
| Health | Number of years one can expect to live in good health | Disaggregated | 2011-2017 | NUTS 3 |
| Education | Share of population with tertiary education | Disaggregated | 2005-2016 | NUTS 3 |
| Social Exclusion | At risk of social exclusion rate | Disaggregated | 2008-2017 | NUTS 3 |
| Environment | Ecological footprint | Composite | not being measured yet | NUTS 3 |
| Space | Number, area, and type of functionally degraded areas | Disaggregated | 2017; 2019 – data on a yearly basis | NUTS 3, LAU 2 |
| Accessibility | Share of population within a radius of 1 km from the public passenger transport station with sufficient and adequate frequency | Composite | 2019-2026 (data is not available yet) | NUTS 3, LAU 2 |
| Culture | Number of visits to public libraries per capita | Disaggregated | 2010-2018 | NUTS 3, LAU 2 |
| Governance | Participation in parliamentary elections | Disaggregated | 2014, 2018 | NUTS 3, LAU 2 |
| Security | Share of households reporting problems with crime, vandalism, or violence in their living environment | Disaggregated | 2008-2017 | NUTS 3 |

3.1.2 Measuring QoL in Gorizia

The framework of reference to measure quality of life in Italy is the set of equitable and sustainable well-being (BES) indicators and survey administered by ISTAT through its network of regional offices.

The list of BES domains and indicators, and the availability of data at NUTS2 and NUTS 3 level (the latter for a sample of cities, including also the city of Gorizia), was presented in Annex 3 to the ESPON QoL Inception report. The following table reproduces the list of indicators available for the 12 BES domains, from ISTAT and other sources, at NUTS 3 level for Gorizia 's province.

Table 5 BES indicators at NUTS 3 level

| Domain | Indicators | Data source | Time series |
|-------------------------------|---|--|-------------|
| Health | Life expectancy at birth | ISTAT | 2004 - 2016 |
| | Infant mortality rate | ISTAT | 2004 -2015 |
| | Road accidents mortality rate (15-34 years old) | ISTAT | 2004 - 2016 |
| | Age-standardised cancer mortality rate (20-64 years old) | ISTAT | 2004 -2014 |
| | Age-standardised mortality rate for dementia and nervous system diseases (65-w) | ISTAT | 2004 - 2014 |
| Education and training | Participation in early childhood education | Ministry of Education, University and Research | 2008 - 2016 |
| | People with at least secondary education level (25-64 years old) | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| | People having completed tertiary education (25-39 years old) | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| | First-time entry rate to university by cohort of upper secondary graduates | Ministry of Education, University and Research | 2014 -2016 |
| | People not in education, employment, or training - NEET (15- 29 years old) | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| | Participation in long-life learning | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| | Level of literacy (in secondary students) | Invalsi | 2017 |
| | Level of numeracy (in secondary students) | Invalsi | 2017 |
| Work and life balance | Employment rate (20-64 years old) | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| | Non-participation rate (15-74 years old) | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| | Incidence rate of fatal occupational injuries [or injuries leading to permanent disability] | ISTAT | 2005 -2015 |
| | Youth employment rate (15-29 years old) | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| | Youth non-participation rate (15-29 years old) | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| | Paid days in the year (employees) | ISTAT | 2009 -2016 |
| Economic wellbeing | Available income per households | ISTAT | 2007 -2012 |
| | Average annual salary of employees | ISTAT | 2009 - 2016 |
| | Average annual number of pensions | ISTAT | 2011 - 2015 |
| | Pensioners with a low pension | ISTAT | 2011 - 2015 |
| | Average amount of family assets | ISTAT | 2007 -2012 |
| | Rate of non-performing loans per households | Bank of Italy | 2004 -2016 |
| Social relationship | Non-profit organizations | ISTAT | 2001; 2011 |
| | Volunteers in non-profit organisations | ISTAT | 2001; 2011 |
| | Schools with obstacle-free routes | ISTAT | 2015 |

| Domain | Indicators | Data source | Time series |
|---|--|----------------------|------------------|
| Politics and institutions | EU election participation | Ministry of Interior | 2004; 2009; 2014 |
| | Regional election participation | Ministry of Interior | 2004 - 2015 |
| | Women municipal administrators | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| | Municipal administrators under 40 years | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| | Prison density | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| | Municipality degree of internal financing | ISTAT | 2007 - 2015 |
| | Municipality revenue collection capacity | ISTAT | 2007 - 2015 |
| Security | Homicide rate | Ministry of Interior | 2004 -2016 |
| | Other reported violent crimes | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| | Reported widespread crimes | ISTAT | 2008 -2016 |
| | Road mortality in suburban areas | ISTAT | 2004 -2016 |
| Landscape and cultural heritage | Density and importance of museum heritage | ISTAT | 2015 |
| | Spreading of agritourism farms | ISTAT | 2010 -2016 |
| | Density of historical green | ISTAT | 2011 - 2016 |
| | Consistency of the historical urban buildings | ISTAT | 2001; 2011 |
| Environment | Water losses in urban supply system | ISTAT | 2015 |
| | Waste in landfill | ISTAT | 2004 - 2016 |
| | Quality of urban air - PM10 | ISTAT | 2013 - 2016 |
| | Quality of urban air - nitrogen dioxide | ISTAT | 2013 - 2016 |
| | Urban green | ISTAT | 2011 - 2016 |
| | Energy from renewable sources | Terna | 2013 - 2016 |
| | Separate collection of municipal waste | ISTAT | 2004 - 2016 |
| Innovation, research, and creativity | Patent propensity | ISTAT | 2004 - 2012 |
| | Incidence of patents in the high-tech sector | Eurostat | 2004 - 2011 |
| | Incidence of patents in the ICT sector | Eurostat | 2004 - 2011 |
| | Incidence of patents in the biotech sector | Eurostat | 2004 - 2011 |
| | Brain circulation (25-39 years old) Net migration rate of holders of a tertiary degree | ISTAT | 2004 - 2016 |
| Quality of service | Children who benefited of early childhood services | ISTAT | 2004 - 2014 |
| | Irregularities in electric power distribution | ISTAT | 2004 - 2016 |
| | Seats-km offered by local public transport | ISTAT | 2004 - 2015 |
| | Hospital emigration to other regions | ISTAT | 2004 - 2015 |

3.1.3 Measuring the cross-border dimension of QoL

Cross-border activities are monitored in the context of the EU regional policy INTERREG V-A, using mostly output indicators which could provide a basis for evaluating the quality of cross-border initiatives and services. The following table shows the framework of indicators for measuring cross-border activities.

Table 6 Indicators for measuring the Interreg cross-border activities

| Description of the use | Indicator | Data used |
|---|---|--|
| <p>The indicators have been developed within the 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Italy – Slovenia.</p> | <p>SO1 Conserving, protecting, restoring, and developing natural and cultural heritage</p> | <p>O1: Number of investments implemented or services/products created supporting preservation/restoration of natural and cultural heritage (Number)</p> |
| | <p>SO2 Development and the testing of innovative environmentally friendly technologies for the improvement of waste and water management</p> | <p>O1: Number of innovative green technologies tested and implemented (Number) O2: Number of enterprises applying new green innovation solutions (Number)</p> |
| | <p>SO3 Enhance the integrated management of ecosystems for a sustainable development of the territory</p> | <p>O1: Tools and services developed for assessing and promoting ecosystem services (Number) O2: Cross-border pilot actions to support biodiversity (Number) O3: Participants to educational and divulgative events (Number)</p> |
| | <p>SO4 Promotion of implementation of strategies and action plans to promote energy efficiency and to improve territorial capacities for joint low-carbon mobility planning</p> | <p>O1: Number of implemented actions towards the decrease of annual primary energy consumption in existing public buildings (Number of building X number of actions) O2: Pilot implementation of innovative services for smart low carbon mobility (Number)</p> |
| | <p>SO5 Strengthen the cooperation among key actors to promote the knowledge transfer and innovative activities in key sectors of the area</p> | <p>O1: Number of innovative services, products and tools transferred to enterprises (Number)</p> |
| | <p>SO6 Strengthen the institutional cooperation capacity through mobilizing public authorities and key actors of the Programme area for planning joint solutions to common challenges</p> | <p>O1: Cross-border agreement and protocols signed (Number) O2: Joint solutions increasing integration, coherence, harmonization of the Programme area governance (shared politics, legislative frameworks or regulations, joint strategic documents, e-government tools, etc.) (Joint solutions) O3: Number of beneficiaries participating in joint training schemes (Number)</p> |
| <p>The indicators have been developed within the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI), a fundamental implementation tool of the Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme.</p> | <p>A1 Promoting innovation capacities for a more competitive area T1 nanotechnologies T2 creative industry</p> <p>A2 Cooperating for implementation of low carbon strategies and action plans T3 Support Energy and Climate Adaptation Policy T4 Mobility and intramodality</p> <p>A3 Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources T5 Excellence in tourism T6 WW1 T7 Minorities and multiculturality T8 Natura 2000 and green infrastructures</p> | <p>N of research institutes joining cross border or interregional projects N enterprises cooperating with research institute N innovative services, products transferred to enterprises N actions for the reduction of public buildings annual primary energy consumption</p> <p>Pilot actions for innovative services for a low carbon emissions & smart mobility Increase of visits to cultural and natural heritage sites N services/products created to support conservation/restore natural or cultural heritage sites Km of completed cycling route</p> <p>Surface of habitats co-financed to obtain a better status of conservation Instruments and services developed for the evaluation and promotion of eco-systemic services Cross-border pilot actions supporting biodiversity Participants to educational and promotional events N tested and implemented innovative green technologies</p> |

| Description of the use | Indicator | Data used |
|--|--|---|
| | T9 Floods directive A4 Enhancing capacity building and cross-border governance T10 Civil protection | N companies applying new or innovative ecological solutions Population is benefitting of protection measures preventing floods Common solutions that increase integration, cohesion, harmonization of governance in the Programme area N crossborder health-care teams trained and operational N beneficiaries participating to common trainings Signed Cross-border protocols and agreements. |
| The indicators have been developed within the ITI Isonzo-Soča project for the cross-border nature park. | L1 - Infrastructure works for the recreational area of Vrtojba L2- Walkway on the Isonzo river in Solkan and cycle paths connecting with the cycle path coming from Bovec L3 - Project for the construction of a cycle and pedestrian route along the border Transalpine Route L4 - Construction of pedestrian and cycle paths along the Isonzo from via degli Scogli to Parco Piuma and up to Straccis and along the transversal axis from the Piuma Park to via San Gabriele. | |
| The indicators have been developed within the ITI Projects - Salute-Zdravsto - Building a cross-border healthcare network. | O1 - Opportunity to use cross-border health services O2 - Common guidelines for the treatment of patients aged between 18 and 35 with mental health problems O3 – introduce early diagnosis of the autism spectrum disorder O4 - benefit from pre- and post-delivery services, provided by a cross-border group of midwives and gynaecologists O5 - create a network of cross-border social services for the EGTC population, in particular for vulnerable groups through a protocol between the three Municipalities. | A1 - Single booking system will be developed A2 -multidisciplinary team to inform and prevent, intervene in crisis as a community, reintegrate socially and work-wise A3 - At the Basaglia Park in Gorizia, spaces will be re-furnished for the joint medical team A4 - A number of obstetric services will be provided on EGTC GO A5- Basic and in-depth training will be organized for social services operators. |

3.2 Data sources for QoL

3.2.1 Data sources for QoL in Nova Gorica

The following table shows all the data that are publicly available at municipal level for Nova Gorica. This is the set of indicators and data that are used to make a comparison with the Territorial Quality of Life framework of the ESPON QoL project and check which TQoL domains can be filled with available data or not. The exercise will be done in this way from the Slovenian side and compared with a similar exercise to check data availability and gaps from the Italian side (see next section 3.2.2).

Table 7: Nova Gorica data for measuring QoL at municipality level

| Indicator | Data used | Time-series | Data sources | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Agriculture | Land use - % of Agriculture Land | 2002, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020 | Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Republic of Slovenia | |
| Drinking water | Microbiological quality of drinking water | 2016-2018 | National Institute for Public Health (NIJZ) | |
| | Share of inhabitants that have access to drinking water with controlled microbiological quality | 2019 | National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food (NLZOH) | |
| Credit, savings, and income | Average monthly gross earnings per person (EUR) | 2008-2019 | SiStat Database | |
| | Average monthly net earnings per person (EUR) | 2008-2019 | | |
| | Average monthly gross earnings (index SI=100) | 2008-2019 | | |
| | Average monthly net earnings (index SI=100) | 2008-2019 | | |
| Environmental quality | Water | Water pollution (LU WB) | 2009-2019 | Slovenian Environmental Agency (ARSO) |
| | | Areas with hydrogeological risks | 2020 | |
| | Air | Air pollution-ozone | 2002-2017 | |
| | | Average monthly level of SOX | 1997-1997, 2000-2018 | |
| | | Average monthly level of NOX | 1997-1997, 2000-2018 | |
| | | Average monthly level of ozone | 1997-1997, 2000-2018 | |
| | | Number of installations causing large-scale environmental pollution | 2020 | |
| | | Average daily concentration of PM2.5 | 2019, 2020 | |
| | Average daily concentration of PM10 | 2019, 2020 | | |
| | Waste | Municipal waste landfilled (tons) | 2002-2018 | |
| | | Landfilled municipal waste (kg per capita) | 2002-2018 | |
| | | Municipal waste collected by public waste removal scheme (tons) | 2002-2018 | |
| | | Municipal waste collected by public waste removal scheme (kg per capita) | 2002-2018 | |
| | | Municipal waste generated (tons) | 2002-2018 | |
| | | Generated municipal waste (kg per capita) | 2002-2018 | |
| | | Price for waste and bio-waste collection in €/kg | 2019 | Komunala Nova Gorica |
| | | Number of containers for waste separation locations | 2020 | |
| Number of landfills of waste | | 2020 | | |

| Indicator | Data used | Time-series | Data sources | |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | Mobility | Persons in employment - daily commuters by municipality of residence and municipality of place of work | 2002 | SiStat Database |
| | | Labour migration index | 2000 - 2019 | |
| | | Road traffic information (Average Annual Daily Traffic) | 1997 - 2018 | Ministry of infrastructure, Republic of Slovenia |
| | | Number of passenger cars | 2008-2019 | SiStat Database |
| | | Labour migration index | 200-2019 | |
| | | Cycling network density | 2020 | The surveying and mapping authority of the Republic of Slovenia (GURS) |
| | | Bus stations | 2007, 2012 | Geopedia |
| | Environmental data | Number of natural values (points) | 2002 | Slovenian Environment Agency (ARSO) |
| | | Area of natural values (polygons) | | |
| | | Area of protected areas | | |
| | | Area of forests with a special purpose | | |
| | | Area of protective forests | | |
| | | Area of Natura 2000 | | |
| | | Ecological critical areas | | |
| | | Protected land, Natura 2000 | 2002, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020 | Geoportal ARSO |
| | | Area of Protected Area | | Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Republic of Slovenia |
| | | Land use- % of Built-up Areas | | |
| | Land use - % of Forest | | | |
| | Culture | Presence of Historic Parks/Gardens and other Urban Parks recognised of significant public interest | 2020 | Ministry of Culture |
| Number of school libraries | | 2006 | SiStat Database | |
| Number of libraries | | 2020 | Goriška knjižnica Franceta Bevka Nova Gorica | |
| Number of libraries users | | 2010-2018 | | |
| Urban historic buildings | | 2020 | Ministry of Culture | |
| Demography | Tertiary graduates per 1000 population | 2008-2019 | SiStat Database | |
| | Number of self-employed persons (by workplace) | 2008-2019 | | |
| | Average monthly gross earnings per person | 2008-2019 | | |
| | Employment rate (%) | 2008-2019 | | |
| | Population aged 15 years or more by education | 2011-2019 | | |

| Indicator | Data used | Time-series | Data sources |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| | Number of persons with registered permanent residence in the Republic of Slovenia within the municipality by 5-year age groups | 2007-2020 | |
| | Families with children by number of children | 2011, 2015, 2018 | |
| | Number of live births | 1995-2018 | |
| | Number of weddings per year | 1995-2019 | |
| | Number of divorces per year | 1995-2019 | |
| | Population aged 15 years or more by activity status | 2011-2019 | |
| Housing | Households by number of members | 2008-2019 | SiStat Database |
| | Number of occupied dwellings by number of rooms and number of persons | 2008-2019 | |
| | Share of dwellings with three or more rooms (%) | 2008-2019 | |
| | Average useful floor space (m2) of dwellings | 2008-2019 | |
| | Number of dwellings per 1000 population | 2008-2019 | |
| | Number of sports facilities | 2020 | The surveying and mapping authority of the Republic of Slovenia (GURS) |
| Business | Number of persons in employment (by residence) | 2008-2019 | SiStat Database |
| | Number of persons in employment (by workplace) | 2008-2019 | |
| | Number of persons in paid employment (by workplace) | 2008-2019 | |
| | Number of enterprises | 2008-2018 | |
| | Turnover of enterprises (1,000 EUR) | 2008-2018 | |
| | Number of self-employed persons (by workplace) | 2008-2019 | |
| | Employment rate (%) | 2008-2019 | |
| | Number of volunteering organizations | 2020 | AJPES |
| No-profit organizations | | | |
| Education | Number of pupils | 2008-2019 | SiStat Database |
| | Number of upper secondary school pupils (by residence) | 2008-2019 | |
| | Number of tertiary students (by residence) | 2008-2020 | |
| | Tertiary students per 1000 population | 2008-2021 | |
| | Tertiary graduates per 1000 population | 2008-2019 | |
| | Number of children in kindergartens | 2008-2019 | |
| | Children aged 1-5 in kindergartens (%) | 2008-2019 | |
| | Number of primary schools | 2020 | |

| Indicator | Data used | Time-series | Data sources |
|--|---|--------------------|---|
| | Number of higher education institutions | 2020 | Municipality of Nova Gorica |
| | Number of secondary schools | 2020 | |
| | Number of kindergartens | 2008-2019 | SiStat Database |
| Health | Beds in residential health care facilities | 2007-2019 | National Institute for Public Health (NIJZ) |
| | Home assistance service (% of persons over 65 years old that take advantage of it) | | |
| | New cancer cases | 2016 | |
| | Number of people receiving medicines due to mental disorders | 2016-2019 | |
| | Health self-assessment | 2016-2020 | |
| | Sick leave | 2016-2020 | |
| | Diseases caused by alcohol consumption | 2016-2020 | |
| | General mortality | 2016-2020 | |
| | Adults obesity | 2016-2019 | |
| | Children obesity | 2016-2020 | |
| | Health condition | 1995-2018 | |
| | Number of inhabitants per 100 inhabitants receiving medicines for high blood pressure | 1995-2018 | |
| | Mortality due to suicide | 2016-2020 | |
| Mortality before age 65 (also divided by gender) | 2016-2020 | | |
| Climate change | Change in annual mean number of days with heavy rainfall | 1948-2019 | ARSO METEO |
| | Change in annual mean number of days with snow cover | | |
| | Change in annual mean number of summer days | | |
| | Change in annual mean temperature | | |
| | Relative change in annual mean evaporation | | |
| | Relative change in annual mean precipitation in summer months | | |
| | Relative change in annual mean precipitation in winter months | | |
| Safety | Convicted adults and juveniles by the municipality of permanent residence | 2006-2018 | SiStat Database |
| | Number of traffic accidents caused by drunk driver | 2016-2020 | National Institute for Public Health (NIJZ) |
| | Injured in transport accidents | 2016-2020 | National Institute for Public Health (NIJZ) |

| Indicator | Data used | Time-series | Data sources |
|-----------|---|-------------|--------------|
| | Irregular migration | 2001-2020 | Police |
| | Number of criminal acts (by type of criminal act) | 2002-2019 | Police |
| | Number of traffic accidents | 1995-2019 | Police |

3.2.2 Data sources for QoL in Gorizia

Beyond the NUTS 3 level that is covered by the BES as previously described, the Statistical Atlas of Municipalities issued by ISTAT provides a wide variety of information on economic, social, environmental, cultural and demographic aspects for all municipalities in Italy, including Gorizia. The statistical information can be consulted from a web platform where data are organised in 16 areas and more than 40 thematic sub-areas. A peculiar feature of this data warehouse is that the information, starting from the municipal level, can be aggregated, filtered, and consulted according to multiple territorial typologies (including NUTS 1-5).

Table 8 Statistical Atlas of Municipalities indicators

| Indicator | Data used | Time-series | Data sources |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Agriculture | Producers and processors of agri-food products (DOP-IGP and TSG) | 2014 - 2016 | ISTAT, Ministry for Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies |
| Drinking water | Water input and output of the municipal network for drinking water distribution (m3) | 2012; 2015 | ISTAT |
| Social Services | Expenditure of social services by types of users, types of interventions and service managers | 2013; 2014 | ISTAT, Ministry of Economy and Finances |
| | Expenditure and number of users of early childhood socio-educational services by type of intervention and management | 2013; 2014 | |
| Credit, savings, and income | Number of bank branches | 2015-2018 | Bank of Italy |
| | Amount of deposits and loans (€) | 2015-2018 | Bank of Italy |
| | Taxpayers Taxpayers with income from real estate Income from real estate (€) Taxpayers with income from employment and similar Income from employment and similar (€) Taxpayers with pension income Pension income (€) Taxpayers with income from self-employment Self-employment income (€) Taxpayers with business income Business income Taxpayers with income from capital gains Income from capital gains (€) Taxpayers with taxable income Taxable income (€) | 2012-2017 | Ministry of Economy and Finances |
| Environmental quality | Water | Water consumption for domestic use per capita (m3) | 2010; 2011 |
| | | Population served by urban wastewater treatment plants (%) | 2008-2011 |

| Indicator | | Data used | Time-series | Data sources | |
|---|---------------------------|--|-------------|--------------|---|
| | Air | Fixed monitoring units of air quality (n/100.000 inhabitants and n/100km2) | 2008-2012 | | |
| | | Number of times that PM10 limit has been exceeded | 2008-2012 | | |
| | Energy | Household electricity consumption per capita (kWh) | 2008-2012 | | |
| | | Consumption of methane gas for domestic use and heating per capita (m3) | 2008-2012 | | |
| | | Power of photovoltaic panels of communal buildings on 100,000 inhabitants (kW) | 2008-2012 | | |
| | | Extension of thermal panels of communal buildings on 100,000 inhabitants (m2) | 2008-2012 | | |
| | | | | | |
| | Waste | Municipal waste collection compared to inhabitants (Kg) | 2008-2012 | | |
| | | Waste sorting (Kg, %) | 2008-2012 | | |
| | | Population served by waste sorting (%) | 2008-2012 | | |
| | Noise | Noise monitoring campaigns per 100,000 inhabitants | 2008-2012 | | |
| | | Number of times that noise limit has been exceeded | 2008-2012 | | |
| | | Extension of noise-reducing asphalt on km3 | 2007-2009 | | |
| | | Extension of noise barriers on km3 | 2007-2009 | | |
| | Mobility | Motorcycles and cars per 1,000 inhabitants | 2008-2012 | | |
| | | Public transport demand per capita | 2008-2012 | | |
| | Environmental data | Experiences of participatory design Environmental report Social Report Collection of toners, batteries, batteries and WEEE ISO 14001 certifications and EMAS registration for municipal buildings and participating entities Green purchases (electronics, furniture, furnishing, cleaning, energy services, building materials) School supplies (fair trade and organic products) Energy efficiency of public lighting Light pollution prevention and reduction Cars (total, methane, LPG, electric and petrol) Paper (recycled and environmentally friendly) Types of public lighting Green management Urban green (typology including historical, density, m2, %) Density protected areas Ecological network Total density of green areas | 2013 | | |
| | Culture | Number of museums or similar institutions Number of visitors | 2017; 2018 | | ISTAT; Ministry of Cultural Assets and Activities |
| | Demography | Resident population by gender and age | 1991-2019 | | ISTAT |
| | | Nuptiality by type of marriage and property regime | 2004-2016 | | |
| Birth rate including age, nationality, and residence of the parents | | 1999-2016 | | | |
| Resident foreigners by gender and age | | 2012-2017 | | | |

| Indicator | Data used | Time-series | Data sources |
|--|---|--------------------|---|
| Business | Number of active enterprises by ATECO number and companies' size | 2012 - 2017 | ASIA register |
| | Number of employees in active enterprises (annual average values) by ATECO number and enterprise size | 2012 - 2017 | |
| Education | University students by degree course, gender, and nationality | 2015-2017 | Ministry of Universities and Research |
| Health | Healthcare institutions & beds in ordinary decency and day hospital for areas of clinical specialization and type of institutions | 2014-2017 | Ministry of Health |
| Hydrogeological characteristics | Low, medium, and high hydraulic hazard zones (km ³) Pai - aa attention area (km ³) Moderate, medium, high and extremely high landslide hazard area (km ³) | 2017 | ISPRA report on hydrogeological instability |
| Tourism | Farmhouses by type of services (accommodation, restaurants, etc.) | 2014 - 2017 | Municipalities |
| | Tourism carrying capacity in terms of number of accommodation facilities, rooms, beds and bathrooms by ATECO code and type of establishment, degree of urbanization and geographical location, as well as country of residence of visitors. | 2002 - 2016 | Municipalities |
| Safety | Road accidents considering deaths, injuries | 2001-2008 | ISTAT |

4 Analysing and testing the methodology used in the case study as compared to TQoL approach

4.1 Comparing the QoL approach in the case study with the TQoL conceptual model

In this section, the two approaches to measure QoL that have been developed in Nova Gorica and Gorizia are mapped onto our TQoL framework.

In figure 6, the indicators for the area of Nova Gorica that will be used to test the methodology for territorial quality of life are highlighted. The data has been gathered from different publicly available sources and institutions, as no systematic and centralized provision of data related to quality of life has been established yet. In accordance with figure 6, it appears that the data gathered covers most of the subdomains defined in the TQoL conceptual model. No data is available for the Digital connectivity and Institutional Trust (good governance) subdomains. In addition, no subjective data on quality of life is available, as no such surveys were done on the area of Nova Gorica.

Figure 7: The TQoL framework for the Municipality of Nova Gorica

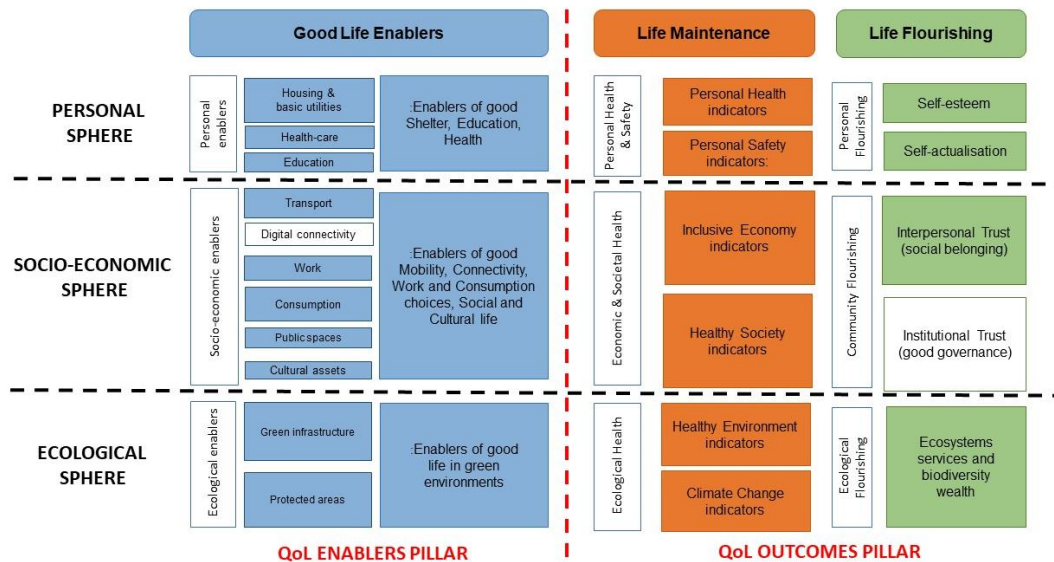
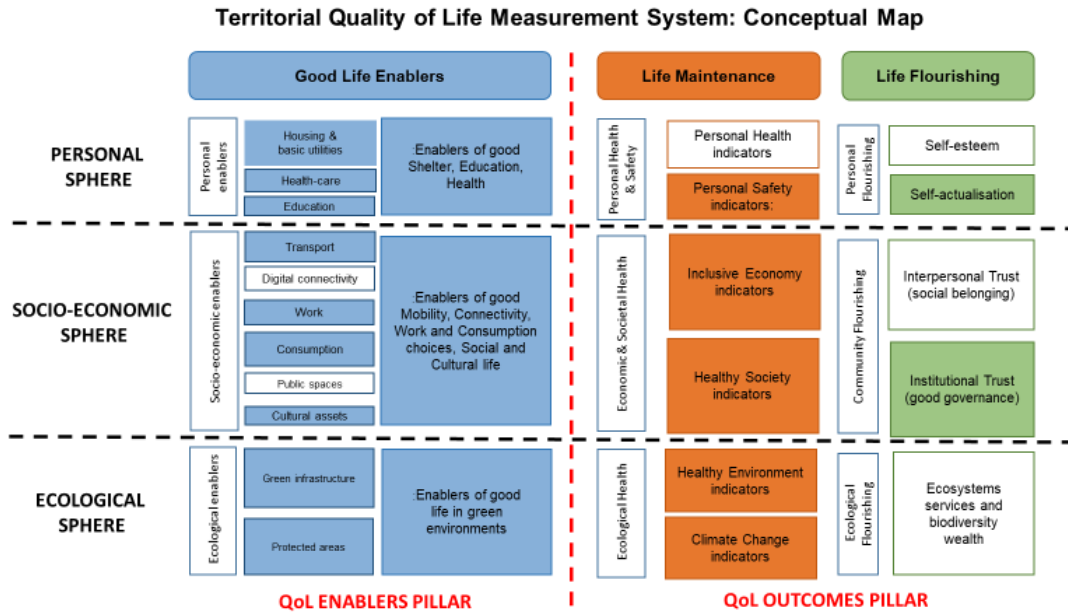


Figure 7 highlights the sub-dimensions of the TQoL framework that are covered by Gorizia data measuring territorial dynamics. Most dimensions are covered by the Statistical Atlas of Municipalities, except for six subdomains, demonstrating a correspondence between the two frameworks. Digital connectivity, public spaces and ecosystems services, and biodiversity wealth are the only subdomains not covered.

Figure 8 TQoL framework for Gorizia



4.2 Coding the indicators

The following table codes the data from the Gorizia and Nova Gorica indicator systems to the dimensions of the TQoL framework. It is interesting to note that none of the QoL indices covers digital connectivity. The Gorizia indicator system covers the majority sub-domain of Good Life Enablers and Life Maintenance dimensions, while the Nova Gorica indicator system covers a subset of domains. The subdomains of Life Flourishing are covered almost alternately by the Gorizia and Nova Gorica data sources.

4.3 Other relevant features of the approach

4.3.1 Involvement of citizens – Citizen-centric approach to Quality of Life

The most important source for assessing how successful a municipal policy is in practice are the city dwellers. They have to comply with municipal regulations in their everyday life activities and are the first to know when changes are needed. Due to their diverse and rich experience, local knowledge, and connection with the practice, they can make a good assessment of what solutions they would need to implement in order to make their life easier and better, fitting with their (work, education, etc.) purposes and needs, while also accelerating the municipality's development. The inhabitants of a municipality can participate in decision-making by attending consultations, proposing referenda, and having a role in participatory budgeting. Less formalised forms of participation are also being introduced, such as open days at city halls and mayors' offices, assemblies of municipal residents, online forums, and the submission of online proposals.

The Friuli Venezia Giulia's contribution to the next Cohesion Policy significantly involves citizens through the implementation of a survey²¹ to gather their opinions on regional development priorities. On the Slovenian side, although a citizens participatory approach to evaluating the quality of life is not established yet, the Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Centre have conducted the Slovenian Public Opinion Survey since 1968, and this remains the most comprehensive source of empirical data for social scientists in Slovenia. Centre's data repository includes indicators of social stratification, quality of life, national identity, political culture, the role of government, religion, family and work values, health, political orientations, industrial relations, mass media and others. However, it is only available at the national level. In addition, the Statistical office of Republic of Slovenia measures the subjective indicators of the inhabitants' satisfaction. The level of living, including financial abilities of households, health, household budgeted survey, housing conditions, occupied and unoccupied dwellings and poverty and social exclusion within overall life satisfaction (SILC) is being measured. This survey offers data mainly at national level, but some is also available at the level of cohesion and statistical regions.

At the municipal level, the participatory budget framework ensures cooperation with local inhabitants and other interested stakeholders. Citizens' suggestions can impact the development of the area and steer public investments if they are aligned with development strategies. However, considering the volume of the participatory budget, it is not yet on the stage where it would adequately address all the needs and problems of the area.

Participatory approach based on the involvement of citizens and nature-based solutions is coming more in more into focus of EU funded projects, like Urbinat²² One of the results of the project is the realisation of a new city park based on participatory workshops that involved citizens and local organisation in co-designing the public work. The park is located around the former clay quarry, where a natural lake has been self-generated once production activities have been abandoned. Nowadays, the lake has many functions: it serves as a rainwater retention area, protecting the city from flooding; it is a biodiversity habitat for different types of plants, insects, fish, amphibians, birds and other animals; it is connected to the residential neighbourhood with sports and cultural facilities, as well as walking and recreational spots.

²¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/politichedicoesione20212027FVG>

²² Founded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 776783 <https://urbinat.eu/>

4.3.2 Misperceptions vs fact-based evidence

Given that no measurement of quality of life has been established in the cross-border FUA of Nova Gorica and Gorizia yet, a short exercise was implemented during the interviews with the representatives of the Regional Development Agency of Northern Primorska, the EGTC GO, the Info point of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020, and the Municipality of Nova Gorica and Gorizia. Ten interviewees were asked to assess the extent to which individual domains contribute to overall quality of life in Nova Gorica and Gorizia. The table below shows the share of consensus across the interviewees.

Table 10: Share of consensus across the interviewees about QoL domains contribution to the overall quality of life

| Domain | More in Nova Gorica (%) | More in Gorizia (%) | Same in the two areas (%) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Personal enablers | 80 | 10 | 10 |
| Socioeconomic enablers | 20 | 50 | 30 |
| Ecological enablers | 70 | 10 | 20 |
| Personal Health and Safety | 30 | 0 | 70 |
| Economic and Societal Health | 30 | 0 | 70 |
| Ecological Health | 10 | 20 | 70 |
| Personal Flourishing | 30 | 50 | 20 |
| Community Flourishing | 10 | 10 | 80 |
| Ecological Flourishing | 50 | 20 | 30 |

Based on the assessment of stakeholders, the state of Personal Health and Safety, Economic and Societal Health, Ecological Health, and Community Flourishing are comparable on the cross-border level. In some cases, the interviewees' choice was problematic since the state of the sub-domains is divergent, e.g. for Economic and Societal Health. The dynamics of the inclusive economy are in contrast with the efforts and results for a healthy society. Interviewees pointed out that the Slovenian market is more dynamic as it is more flexible to support the opening of new enterprises. On the other hand, the Italian socio-welfare and educational system, especially at the university level, is very structured and qualitatively appreciated also by Slovenians. The comparable state of the subdomains shows that the functional area deals with similar challenges that have to be addressed on both sides of the border. On the other hand, Personal enablers, Ecological enablers, Ecological Flourishing domains are perceived to contribute more to quality of life in Nova Gorica than in Gorizia, while Socioeconomic enablers and Personal Flourishing are perceived to contribute more to quality of life in Gorizia. This offers an opportunity to transfer best practices – as the digitalisation of the fiscal system - from one city to the other and reduce the differences.

4.4 Application of the methodology in the case study context

The application of the dashboard requires a minimum of five observation per specific indicators to allow a significant calculation of the Territorial Quality of Life Index and provide relevant results in term of TQoL performance at different levels (sub-domain, domain, dimension and global). The research has explored the possibility of expanding the territorial scope of the analysis since neither Gorizia nor Nova Gorica collects data at the neighbourhood level. Based

on criteria of comparability and relevance, specified in the scope, the study has investigated the data availability for the following two options:

1. Scope: consistency of mobility patterns in the area delimited by the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan elaborated for the cross-border region of Nova Gorica – Gorizia:

Italian municipalities: Capriva del Friuli, Cormons, Doberdò del Lago-Doberdob, Dolegna del Collio, Farra d'Isonzo, Fogliano Redipuglia, Gorizia, Gradisca d'Isonzo, Grado, Mariano del Friuli, Medea, Monfalcone, Moraro, Mossa, Romans d'Isonzo, Ronchi dei Legionari, Sagrado, San Canzian d'Isonzo, San Floriano del Collio-Števerjan, San Lorenzo Isontino, San Pier d'Isonzo, Savogna d'Isonzo-Sovodnje ob Soči, Staranzano, Turriaco, Villesse.

Slovenian municipalities: Brda, Nova Gorica, Renče-Vogrsko, Šempeter-Vrtojba and Komen (the latter was included in the SUMP area, which excludes however the municipality of Ajdovščina)

2. Scope: employment area defined by using the flows of daily home/work trips (commuting) collected at the General Population and Housing Censuses by the respective national authorities.

Italian municipalities: Option 1 + Trieste, Udine, San Giorgio di Nogaro, Cividale del Friuli

Slovenian municipalities: Option 1 + Sežana, Kozina, Koper and Ankaran (while Ajdovščina and Tolmin are not included as they are assigned to the the Trieste's employment area)

Figure 8 shows in white the sub-dimensions of the TQoL framework that are not covered by the data for a significant number of municipalities. On the Italian side, the indicators highlighted in white (e.g. those related to healthcare, ecological enablers, institutional trust) has been collected only for municipalities that are provincial capitals, namely Gorizia, Udine and Trieste. The figure reveals significant gaps on the Italian sides, where only half of the subdomains have been covered by a sufficient number of observations, while data of Slovenian municipalities fill in nearly 80% of subdomains. In spite of these conditions, most of the Slovenian data are not publicly available and the heterogeneity of the sources requires a long effort for collecting data that would not have been possible to conclude within the project time frame.

Figure 9 Feasibility analysis for applying the TQoL dashboard

| |
|---|
| <p>Legend:</p> <p>Italy - Available data at the municipal level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The indicators marked in white are available for the following municipalities: Gorizia, Trieste, Udine • The coloured indicators are available for the following municipalities - although the level of completeness is not uniformly high: Capriva del Friuli, Cormons, Doberdò del Lago-Doberdob, Dolegna del Collio, Farra d'Isonzo, Fogliano Redipuglia, Gorizia, Gradisca d'Isonzo, Grado, Mariano del Friuli, Medea, Monfalcone, Moraro, Mossa, Romans d'Isonzo, Ronchi dei Legionari, Sagrado, San Canzian d'Isonzo, San Floriano del Collio-Števerjan, San Lorenzo Isontino, San Pier d'Isonzo, Savogna d'Isonzo-Sovodnje ob Soči, Staranzano, Turriaco, Villesse, Trieste, Udine, San Giorgio di Nogaro, Cividale del Friuli <p>Slovenia - Available data at the municipal level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The coloured indicators are available for the following: Brda, Nova Gorica, Renče-Vogrsko, Šempeter-Vrtojba and Komen, Sežana, Kozina, Koper and Ankaran. |
|---|

| Dim. | Dom. | Sub-domain | ITALY - AVAILABLE DATA AT MUNICIPAL LEVEL | SLOVENIA - AVAILABLE DATA AT MUNICIPAL LEVEL |
|------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Good Life Enablers | Personal Enablers | Housing & basic utilities | Population served by urban wastewater treatment plants (%) | Average useful floor space (m2) of dwellings |
| | | | Population served by waste sorting (%) | Number of dwellings per 1000 population |
| | | | Household electricity consumption per capita (kWh) | Municipal waste collected by public waste removal scheme (kg per capita) |
| | | | Consumption of methane gas for domestic use and heating per capita (m3) | Generated municipal waste (kg per capita) |
| | | | Water input and output of the municipal network for drinking water distribution (m3) | Microbiological quality of drinking water |
| | | | Water consumption for domestic use per capita (m3) | |
| | | | Income from real estate (€) | |
| | | Health-care | Healthcare institutions & beds in ordinary decency and day hospital for areas of clinical specialization and type of institutions | Home assistance service (% of persons over 65 years old that take advantage of it) |
| | | Education | Expenditure and number of users of early childhood socio-educational services by type of intervention and management | Number of children in kindergartens |
| | Socioeconomic Enabler | Transport | Public transport demand per capita | Road traffic information (Average Annual Daily Traffic) |
| | | Digital connectivity | Motorcycles and cars per 1,000 inhabitants | Number of passenger cars per 100 inhabitants |
| | | Work | Number of active enterprises by ATECO number and companies' size | Labour migration index |
| | | | Producers and processors of agri-food products (DOP-IGP-TSG) | |
| | | | Number of workers in active enterprises (annual average values) by ATECO number and enterprise size | |
| | | Consumption | Number of bank branches | Arrivals and overnight stays of domestic and foreign tourists |
| | | | Farmhouses by type of services (accommodation, restaurants, etc.) | |
| | | | Tourism carrying capacity in terms of number of accommodation facilities, rooms, beds and bathrooms by ATECO code and type of establishment, degree of urbanization and geographical location, as well as country of residence of the visitors | |
| | Public spaces | | Number of sports facilities | |
| | Cultural Assets | Number of museums or similar institutions Number of visitors | | |
| | Ecological Enablers | Green infrastructure | Urban green (typology including historical, density, m2, %) | |
| Protected areas | | Density protected areas | Area of protected areas | |
| Life Maintenance | Personal Health and Safety | Personal Health | | Share of premature deaths (%) |
| | | | | New cancer cases |
| | | | | Diseases caused by alcohol consumption |
| | | | | Number of inhabitants per 100 inhabitants receiving medicines for diabetes |
| | | | | Number of inhabitants per 100 inhabitants receiving medicines for high blood pressure |
| | | | | Number of people receiving medicines due to mental disorders |
| | | Health self assessment | | |
| | | Personal Safety | Road accidents considering deaths, injuries | Number of traffic accidents |
| | Economic and Societal Health | Inclusive Economy | Taxpayers by source of income / Resident population by gender and age | Number of persons in employment (by residence) |
| | | | Income by source of income (self-employment, business, capital gains) | Number of self-employed persons (by work place) |
| | | Healthy Society | Amount of deposits and loans (€) | Employment rate (%) |
| | | | | Average monthly gross earnings per person |
| | Healthy Environment | Healthy Environment | Expenditure of social services by types of users, types of interventions and service managers | Number of pupils |
| | | | Number of times that PM10 limit has been exceeded | Tertiary graduates per 1000 population |
| | | | Number of times that noise limit has been exceeded | |
| | | | Extension of noise barriers on km3 | |
| | | Climate Change | Energy efficiency of public lighting | |
| | | | Extension of noise-reducing asphalt on km3 | |
| | | | Low, medium and high hydraulic hazard zones (km3) | Change in annual mean temperature |
| | | | Pai - aa attention area (km3) | Relative change in annual mean evaporation |
| | Moderate, medium, high and very high landslide hazard area (km3) | Change in annual mean number of days with heavy rainfall | | |
| | Power of photovoltaic panels of communal buildings per 100.000 inhabitants (kW) | | | |
| | Extension of thermal panels of communal buildings per 100.000 inhabitants (m2) | | | |
| | Green purchases (electronics, furniture, furnishing, cleaning, energy services, building materials) | | | |
| Life Flourishing | Personal Flourishing | Self-esteem | Mortality due to suicide | |
| | | Self-actualization | University students by degree course, gender and nationality | |
| | | | Number of weddings per year | |
| | | | Number of divorces per year | |
| | Community Flourishing | Interpersonal trust/ societal belonging | Tertiary graduates per 1000 population | |
| | | | Number of associations | |
| | | Institutional trust/good governance | Number of volunteering organizations | |
| | | Social Report | | |
| | | Environmental Report | | |
| | | ISO14001 certifications and EMAS registration for municipal buildings and participating entities | | |
| | Experiences of participatory design | | | |
| Ecological Flourishing | Ecosystems services and biodiversity | | Area of Built-up Areas (Land use) | |
| | | | Area of Natura 2000 | |

5 Synthesis and conclusions

The twin city of Gorizia and Nova Gorica has been developed on a territory characterised by two cultures that have not coexisted always peacefully. The cultural, linguistic, and legislative integration is not yet completely internalised and developed. The increasing contraction in demand despite the significant local production assets has burdened the context with economic uncertainty. The European support through the institutionalisation of the EGTC GO is a crucial factor to harmonise complex, divergent, and hardly comparable national, regional, and local governance systems. EGTC GO's work has brought about remarkable and tangible improvements in forming common public services, like social work and health care services, and by generating initial economies of scale. The success of cross border cooperation is also proved by the common candidature and nomination for European Capital of Culture 2025. The latter initiative is especially promising, to further progress with cross-border activities, projects and agreements that will help to better harmonise national and/or provincial legislations to overcome the obstacles to operational cooperation.

An integrated and comprehensive framework to develop and measure QoL-related policies and projects would foster cooperation and information flows between different institutions and departments within the municipalities. As it is stated in the Slovenian Development Strategy, the insufficient implementation of strategic documents claims for changes to the management and harmonisation of internal policies, and of the mechanisms to monitor their implementation and targets achievement. Currently, a systemic approach to measure Quality of Life at the territorial level will be established at the regional level in Slovenia, while in Italy, it has been already institutionalised with the BES survey administered by ISTAT (with information available, however, only for the city of Gorizia and the whole NUTS3 region – the former province of Gorizia). Data gaps at the municipal level are significant for both Gorizia and Nova Gorica and increase when all other municipalities of the region are considered. This shortcoming compromises the applicability of dashboard and LC-clustering tools and then the measuring and analysis of the quality of life in the cross-border area. It is crucial to agree on a centralised and strategic approach for monitoring enablers and outcome indicators on both sides of the border and specifically in cross-border QoL projects to assess the impacts of policies, including EU-funded programmes.

Concluding, there is a great need to improve the integration of cross-border strategies and project with the territorial development strategies in place at regional level in Italy and Slovenia – which affect the Nova Gorica-Gorizia area - and coordinate the establishment of legislative, financial and operational frameworks in order to ensure the increased compliance of development policies with local needs of flourishing. In the future, it will be necessary to strengthen mechanisms of horizontal and multi-level cooperation, to improve the mutual knowledge and understanding of cross-cutting topics, and the implementation and monitoring of integrated policies. The quality of life should be recognised as a cross-cutting topic and its monitoring of crucial relevance to strengthen the cooperation with relevant representatives of all municipalities and the territorial cohesion. The spaces to develop this process of harmonisation and integration of local and cross-border policies with regional, national, and international strategies are multiple and potentially fruitful.

The Slovenian and Italian plans to implement the next Cohesion Policy have multiple points of contact and aspects that can be implemented synergistically on the cross-border area. The Slovenian needs of reducing local development disparities and catching up with other European regions can benefit from the FVG priority of establishing life-long learning mechanisms to boost the innovation of regional production systems. Both funding schemes focus on marginal areas to improve opportunities for job placement, in particular for those target groups at higher risk of

exclusion from the labour market, and to support the development of leading sectors of the regional economy. Moreover, both the Slovenian objective of improving the citizens' quality of life and the Italian one of supporting the regional economic recovery are based on sustainable development principles.

National and regional sustainable development strategies offer a very fertile ground to build an integrated and comprehensive framework for the implementation and monitoring of Quality-of-Life policies. For example, the necessity of accelerating the productivity growth for ensuring a higher living standard of the Slovenia population could benefit from Green City priority areas concerning water management, circular waste management and energy efficiency aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emission. The competitiveness of the regional economy will be based on the transition to a circular and low-carbon economy, and sustainable solutions to cope efficiently with disruptive trends such as climate and demographic change. The willingness of the Italian region to focus on urban and peri-urban regeneration could benefit from the Slovenian action to strengthen the strategic governance of public institutions. As part of this vision, the equitable and sustainable well-being (BES) has been conceived to monitor the progress of sustainable development goals, and it represents the most comprehensive and accurate dataset to measure the Territorial Quality of Life.

Finally, it would be reasonable to collect data at the municipal level on an exhaustive indicator set, based on the Territorial Quality of Life concept delivered as a result of ESPON's applied research. This should integrate the measurement of the subjective experience of citizens' QoL, for which surveys should be implemented. These surveys should involve different stakeholders with particular focus on local inhabitants and their experience of quality of life. The further implementation of the citizen-centric approach would not only raise citizens' awareness of territorial development but could provide relevant information for future local development and quality of life scenarios. The involvement of citizens is a fundamental process to solve the issues of governance and integration that characterise this territory.

6 Recommendations

6.1 How the QoL concept and indicators could be further developed in the case study context

Our analysis of the Slovenian and Italian framework for measuring territorial quality of life has shown that it would be useful to include a cross-border dimension to enable and support policy integration.

The case study presented the monitoring and evaluation of Interreg programmes and projects as a possible space for developing the measurement system at the cross-border level in order to encourage the implementation of a symmetrical model by both Slovenian and Italian municipalities. However, the main challenge is to build up an adequate structure for collecting not only input and output indicators but also outcome and subjective ones to measure the impacts of policies comprehensively. Again, the EGCT GO – a common body of three municipalities, Nova Gorica, Šempeter-Vrtojba in Gorizia - is now to be taken as an important opportunity for testing in the cross-border area a common organizational and management model that could be transferred to other cross-border areas too. The monitoring indicators set within different projects should be publicly available as well as the concrete data gathered within their implementation. The definition of measurable indicators and periods in which they will be collected is a crucial step for applying the Territorial Quality of Life framework at the municipal level. A strategic, integrated and systemic approach toward monitoring of the quality of life would provide a pivotal source of data and information that could be used for territorial planning as well as to ensure the comparison of policy achievements between different functional areas and programming periods. Moreover, this step will allow territorial stakeholders to tackle the potential negative trends in terms of QoL, supporting a response to undesirable effects.

The implementation of Territorial Quality of Life dashboard based on BES indicators elaborated at the municipal level and tailored to territorial needs is highly recommended to equip local institutions with a suitable framework to integrate and monitor QoL policies. The BES has been conceived to monitor the progress of sustainable development goals, and its implementation would allow the cross-border framework to be developed in accordance with National and Regional Sustainable Development Strategies. These strategic guidelines offer manifold possibilities of synergic planning for the two municipalities as well as a fruitful ground for developing and integrating Territorial Quality of Life measurement. The EGTC GO, together with the administrations of Nova Gorica and Gorizia, should combine this opportunity with those offered by the implementation of the next Cohesion Policy and European cooperation projects. The introduction of the Territorial Quality of Life dashboard as an instrument to monitor policy progress would offer a common, structured, and neutral ground where develop synergic and integrated policies.

The process of policy harmonisation and integration will have to address one of the main obstacles of this cross-border area, namely the diverging legislative frameworks and political systems. Active citizenship practices and their monitoring would support not only the strongly needed institutional change but also the generational and cultural meeting between past and future desired and outlined by the GO! 2025 project. As part of the European Capital of Cultural 2025, the stakeholders involved should institutionalise the citizen-centric approach to fully realise the potentialities of the social and cultural fabric of the twin city. In general, citizens' involvement in the definition of QoL-related projects would allow for their better implementation and evaluation in term of effectiveness. Two levels of survey implementation between local citizens and other stakeholders in the functional areas are suggested: on a municipal level so that municipalities can use that data for informing strategies and development plans, thus enabling participatory approaches; and on the territorial level of EGTC GO to meet the needs

of the cross-border conurbation dwellers. Moreover, the measurement of subjective indicators could provide meaningful guidance on the social cohesion processes and collaborative practices for community building.

Finally, the impact of measuring QoL would improve if the cross-border framework is integrated with development projects and plans to enhance the coherence and synergies between overall institutional objectives and goals of single actions. The quality of life should be recognised as a cross-cutting topic and its monitoring of crucial relevance to allow social cohesion and policy integration.

6.2 How the QoL concept of this ESPON project can be improved and enriched

This ESPON project introduces an integrated framework to comprehensively measure citizens' quality of life. There is a large number of domains and aspects to be detected, and there is evident difficulty in collecting suitable data at the municipal level, especially in the case of cross-border territories. Moreover, the absence of specific Quality of Life programmes, as well as habit of measuring the impacts of policies entails that some of the available data was not suitable for our framework since it was collected to meet different goals. Notwithstanding the TQoL framework is already exhaustive, the absence of governance factor is a significant lack for this case study. The aspects of governance, as a factor enabling Quality of Life as well as an outcome in the Life Flourishing pillar, have a decisive influence on the quality of life in Gorizia and Nova Gorica. Furthermore, ESPON should promote open data policy at the administrative level, preferably in the form of one-stop-shop, to gather a large pool of data. Finally, the practice of measuring ex-ante and ex-post programmes and projects, including the QoL dimensions, should be fostered among ESPON as well as other EU agencies, institutions, and other stakeholders.

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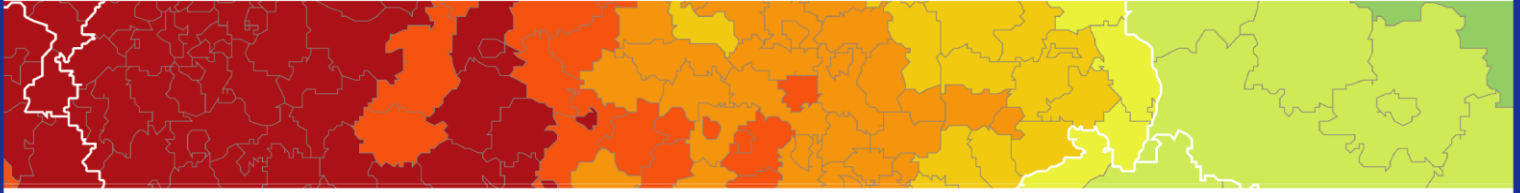
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