

TIPOLOGIJA IN RAZVOJNE ZNAČILNOSTI PODEŽELSKIH OBMOČIJ V SLOVENIJI

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Izveček

V prispevku je predstavljena tipološka členitev podeželja v Sloveniji, ki ta prostor deli v tri osnovne tipe: obmestna območja, značilna podeželska območja ter območja praznjenja. Sledi primerjalna analiza stanja in možnosti opredeljenih podeželskih območij na podlagi vzorca in z uporabo demografskih, kmetijskih, ekonomskih in socialnih kazalcev. Sociološki del raziskave temelji na rezultatih ankete, izvedene med vodstvenimi ljudmi v vzorčnih lokalnih skupnostih, ter vključuje mnenja o stanju in razvojnih možnostih vzorčnih podeželskih območij ter predloge in pripombe pripravljalcem politike razvoja podeželja.

***Ključne besede:** podeželska območja, tipologija, razvoj podeželja, Slovenija.*

TYOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL AREAS IN SLOVENIA

Abstract

In the article the typology of rural areas in Slovenia is presented. In the research some important indicators of the rural areas have been analysed and three basic types of rural areas have been defined: suburban, typical rural areas and depopulation areas. In the continuation detailed comparison analysis of the situation in defined rural areas on the sample of rural areas is stated. The analysis is based on demographic, agricultural, economic and social indicators. A sociological part of the research is based on interviews with leaders of local communities including opinions about the situation and opportunities of sample rural areas and their proposals and remarks for the rural development policy makers.

***Key words:** rural areas, typology, rural development, Slovenia.*

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Introduction

Rural areas in Slovenia are very heterogeneous. Diversity, sometimes qualitatively characterized as variety, is conditional on geographical characteristics of Slovenian space as well as on variety of historical and contemporary social and economic processes. As a consequence rural areas development chances have been diversified. In different rural areas different processes are applied or the same processes are run with different intensities. A general experts' opinion is that the differences in development conditions and processes are too large to be ignored. Therefore the need for the typology of rural areas on characteristic and homogeneous enough areas has arisen. The main purpose of such approach is diminishing of development differences between separate areas or regions what is also one of the basic aims of the country's corresponding development policy that has to be defined and enforced. It is not possible to dispatch all the differences in development stages between separate areas. Some of them reflect the area's quality and identity and therefore have to be preserved.

In the frame of the research project, financed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the Republic of Slovenia, the presented typology of rural areas in Slovenia was prepared by the Institute of Agricultural Economics from the viewpoint of the rural development problems and possibilities, based on the available statistical data source and in collaboration with some experts in other professions. The most important purpose of the typology was to get bigger geographical units with the same or similar development restrictions or priorities (chances). Such units require an unified development concept and specific programme of development incentives. In the continuation the typology of rural areas in Slovenia is stated in detail.

Separation of urban and rural areas

The first problem we had to face while performing the typology was the separation between urban and rural spaces. Each branch of profession namely defines the rural space from its own research or necessity viewpoint. The areas outside big towns where there are stronger connections of inhabitants with agriculture and forestry, which may or may not be their only source of income, are generally referred to as the rural areas. The fundamental characteristic of rural areas is an economical land use which

gives them a special "signet", very different from characteristics of urban areas. Even if the comparison of living conditions between rural and urban areas is achieved, that does not mean equalization. In Slovenia, as well as in Western Europe, a sharp dividing line between urban and rural ways of life does not exist any more. New achievements of urban civilization have penetrated into the rural space and there can be found activities and civilization achievements earlier known only in the urban areas. Agricultural and forestry activities, once the only and predominant economic branches in the countryside, have lost their importance because of ever wider swing of other economic activities; however, they still occupy the largest part of the rural space. On the other hand, the urban population has been realizing its life interests in the rural environment more and more. In spite of ever greater reciprocal interweaving it is still possible to clearly recognize two different life samples: urban and rural ones.

One of the most important questions is the size of a settlement to be functioning as an urban system. In our case the international criterion cannot be applied since there are no as big urban systems in the country as there are in the Western European states. Connections of our rural areas with urban centres are still relatively intensive. The administrative-territorial distribution of urban and rural municipalities is not appropriate for our purpose, because some urban municipalities include also relatively widely extended and significant rural hinterland. From the viewpoint of integrated rural development planning the most applicable delimit criterion between urban and rural space is an area defined as "the area of managed urban settlements" Such areas are in spatial plans exactly defined and they change in accordance with the development or with urban settlement growing in process of spatial planning. The settlements with urban character were summarized upon the geographical definitions in Slovenia, which sort settlements according to their central function into seven groups (Vrišer, 1998). As urban areas all the settlements from the seventh, the sixth, the fifth and the fourth groups were identified and from the third group just the settlements with more than 3500 inhabitants were classified as urban. There are 55 settlements altogether declared as urban. In expressive urban settlements we spatially defined areas of urban local communities (a criterion was a farm absence), however in other urban settlements we excluded just a central settlement and marked it with a red point on the map. The reason being in a too big local community extending into the rural area. The space outside urban settlements was defined as rural areas. Urban areas are presented on the map with a red colour (see Map 1). Following the already

mentioned starting points the definition was set: From the viewpoint of directing and managing rural development, rural areas include a space outside the areas of managed urban settlements, defined with spatial documents, and all human activities in this space (Kovaeie at al., 1999).

Argumentation for the division of rural areas

In different conditions corresponding approaches are important for the realization of the key development aims as: dispersed settlement preservation, reducing or equalizing the distinctions in life and working conditions and local identity conservation. Areas where the number of inhabitants is decreasing request different approach and measures than the areas which are losing their identity due to intensive immigrations.

From the viewpoint of planning, directing and stimulating integrated rural development it is therefore important:

- to distinguish between urban and rural functions of the society and space management,
- to define a line between urban and rural spaces,
- to recognize and to consider development interdependence of urban and rural areas,
- to define and to consider the role of urban and rural characteristics inter weaving in the areas,
- to recognize and to consider a specific phenomena, processes and development possibilities in different rural areas.

Such recognitions are not present only in Slovenia. Due to similar reasons other institutions (such as OECD, EUROSTAT, European Commission etc.) divide rural areas into homogeneous units. The EU development policy, particularly the rural development and agricultural policy, is also based on such divisions of rural areas. Due to Slovenia joining the European Union the division is necessary especially to enable the creation of Slovenia's own rural and regional development policy. In the past the differences were not considered enough, so they got greater and greater.

Criteria for the division of rural areas in Slovenia

When designing the typology the following points were taken into consideration:

- Typical rural areas have to express a high level of homogeneity of natural conditions and indicators of economic and social development as well as development possibilities.
- Largeness of rural areas have to be appropriate, so that planning and directing of the development on intermunicipality and interregional level is possible and reasonable. On the other hand, by preparing and implementing development plans it has to be possible to assure a principle of subsidiarity.
- A basic unit of rural space division has to satisfy the following conditions:
 1. a high level of homogeneity of development conditions and development processes have to be clearly recognised and thus separate them from other types of spatial units,
 2. has to be installed in the appropriate administrative frame and enable all administrative procedures engaged with the acceptance and implementation of development plans,
 3. such units have to have access to all necessary statistical and other information, so they have to meet the level of statistical data aggregate.

Taking into account that the inhabitants inventory data from 1991 were used, the most appropriate basic unit for spatial division was a local community ("krajevna skupnost"). The data analysis shows that our present municipalities in Slovenia are so heterogeneous that are not appropriate as a basic spatial unit for the typology of rural areas.

Definition of the types of rural areas

To achieve the typology of rural areas harmonized with the methodology of the EU, the division of rural areas by OECD (1994), which distinguishes three basic types of rural areas, was used. We defined also three basic types of rural areas, which are the following:

- I. Suburban areas.
- II. Typical rural areas.
- III. Depopulation areas.

A special problem of the differentiation between the areas is the choice of indicators. The analysis shows that in Slovenia it is not possible to define

rural area types on the basis of only one indicator (for example population density). The features are namely very interwoven in space and interacting correlations between them are not the same everywhere. Besides, some important indicators (as GDP or income tax data/inhabitant) are not available on a suitable level. Therefore different combinations of indicators can be used, according to various development methods in individual areas. Wide spans in value of several indicators further demand the division into subtypes in case of typical rural areas and depopulation areas.

Suburban areas

When defining suburban areas it was supposed that population density and concentration of inhabitants in such areas are already high. The first step was to choose all local communities (LCs) with the population density exceeding 200/km² (on the basis of just one indicator). The fact is that some LCs in a town nearness with high population density show a very slow population growth or even stagnation in the last period. This finding can be explained by the fact that such areas are already more or less filled up. The further step was to choose the LCs with the population density more than 100/km² and with the index of population growth 1981/91 more than 110. It means that the concentration of inhabitants has taken place only in the last period and has not reached a high level yet. Following the last criterion we included in this rural type also some LCs with relatively big rural settlements (not urban character), so we added another criterion - a share of agricultural population, and excluded LCs with a share of agricultural population above 10 %.

Depopulation areas

For the definition of depopulation areas various combinations of the three indicators were used and in this way defined three intensity levels of the situation inside depopulation areas. As areas of intensive depopulation are defined the LCs with the index of population growth 1961/91 and 1981/91 smaller than 97.5 and with the population aging index 1991 higher than 72. A depopulation trend in this areas has been present at least for four decades (with the presumption that the trend after 1991 till now has not changed).

As areas of moderate depopulation are defined those LCs where both, short and long-term trends of the index of population growth are the same as in the former type, but with population aging index 1991 smaller than 72. In those areas despite the decrease in the number of inhabitants the absolute demographic threshold has not yet been achieved.

As the third subtype of depopulation areas those LCs were defined where the number of inhabitants in short-term view has not been reduced, but where the population aging index 1991 already reached a demographic threshold. In the future we can expect a decrease in the number of inhabitants because of the death rate. We refer to those areas as areas of potential depopulation.

Typical rural areas

An intermediate space between the areas of extreme features is defined as typical rural areas. This space is not homogeneous either, but it is relatively stable at least with regard to the demographic situation. This space is divided into the subtypes as well due to its widely extended and geo-

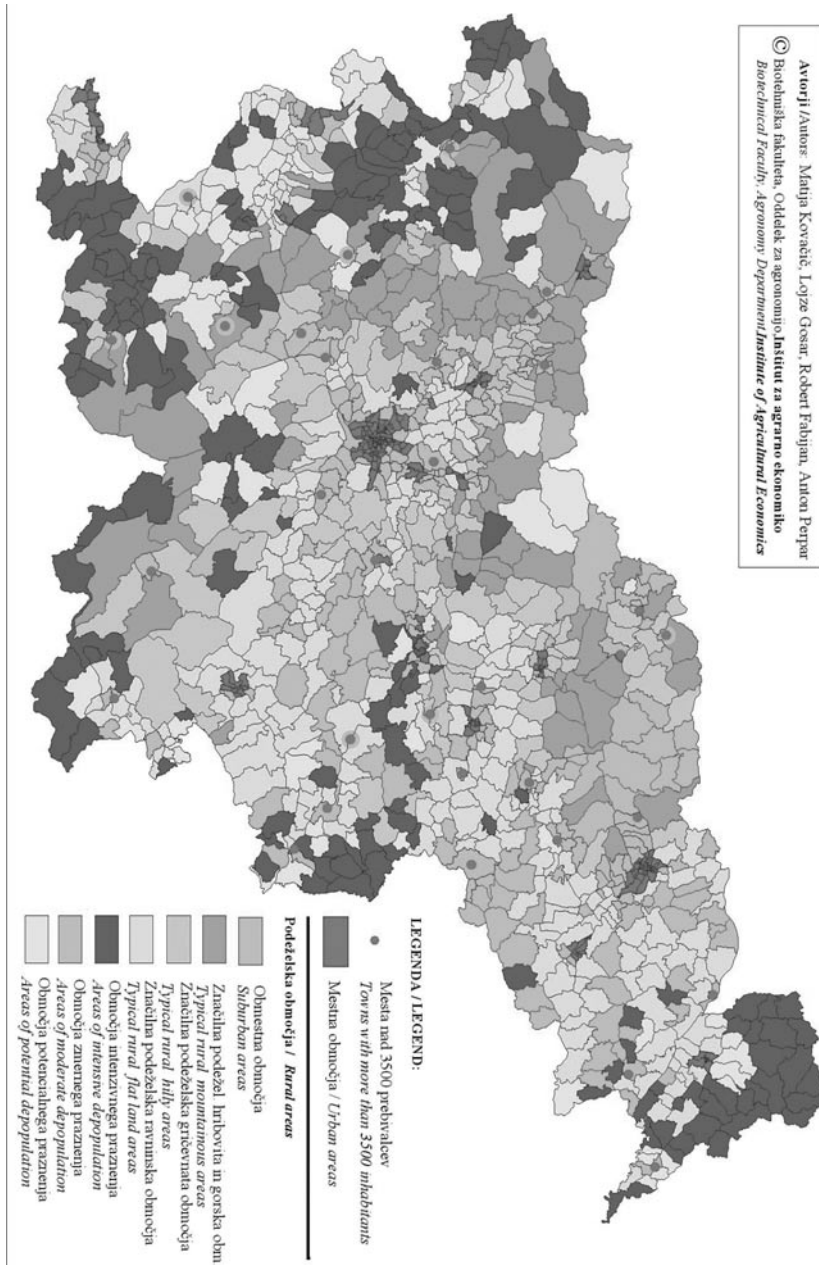
Table 1: Criteria used for the definition of rural area types and subtypes in Slovenia

Tabela 1: Kriteriji...

| RURAL AREA TYPE/SUBTYPE | CRITERIA |
|---|--|
| I. Suburban areas (cover 5.7% of the area and 14.8% of inhabitants) | Population density > 200/km ² OR Population density 100 - 200/km ² AND Index of population growth 1981/91 > 110 AND Share of rural population < 10% |
| II. Typical rural areas (cover 50.5% of the area and 31.2% of inhabitants) | Intermediate space between suburban and depopulation areas. |
| II.A. Typical rural flat land areas | > 50% of LC's area are situated at an altitude of up to 400 m |
| II.B. Typical rural hilly areas | > 50% of LC's area are situated at an altitude from 400-600 m |
| II.C. Typical rural mountainous areas | > 50% of LC's area are situated at an altitude of more than 600 m |
| III: Depopulation areas (cover 42.0% of the area and 14.7% of inhabitants) | Index of population growth 1961/91 < 97.5 AND Index of population growth 1981/91 < 97.5 AND Aging index 1991 > 72 |
| III.A. Areas of intensive depopulation | Index of population growth 1961/91 < 97.5 AND Index of population growth 1981/91 < 97.5 AND Aging index 1991 > 72 |
| III.B. Areas of moderate depopulation | Index of population growth 1961/91 < 97.5 AND Index of population growth 1981/91 < 97.5 AND Aging index 1991 < 72 |
| III.C. Areas of potential depopulation | Index of population growth 1981/91 > 97.5 AND Aging index 1991 > 72 |

Map 1: Typology of rural areas in Slovenia.

Karta 1: Tipološka členitev podeželja v Sloveniji.



graphically diversified space, which in many cases conditionally determine development possibilities and intensities. The most characteristic and suitable dividing indicator is the altitude, namely the height above sea level.

The following three subtypes have been defined.

- Rural flat land areas: more than 50 % of LC's area are situated at an altitude of up to 400 m.
- Rural hilly areas: more than 50 % of LC's area are situated at an altitude from 400 to 600 m.
- Rural mountainous areas: more than 50 % of LC's area are situated at an altitude of above 600 m.

Typology of rural areas in Slovenia is spatially presented in Map 1. Due to the fact that characteristic and homogeneous rural areas expanding over municipal's borders or individual municipalities involve different rural area types, our starting hypothesis is confirmed. Consulting the map one can clearly define intermunicipal areas with the same or similar development problems and possibilities and design intermunicipal and regional programmes.

Comparative analysis of the situation on the sample of rural areas in Slovenia

In the continuation the detailed comparative analysis of the situation in the defined rural areas on the sample of rural areas was made. The sample of rural areas had been chosen coincidentally, with taking into account different geographical areas and their arrangement throughout the country. One unit in one location is presented by three (on two locations just 2) adjacent local communities and in case of suburban areas by 5 LCs with the aim to get more realistic and average information about the situation (just one LC can alight-on positive or negative direction). The sample of rural areas presents suburban areas in 5 locations (5x5 LCs), typical rural areas in 15 locations (5x3 LCs for flat land areas, hilly areas and mountainous areas) and depopulation areas in 15 locations (5x3 LCs for areas of intensive depopulation, areas of moderate depopulation and areas of potential depopulation). Altogether the sample of rural areas consists of 113 local communities (LCs). On the selected sample of rural areas detailed comparative analysis based on agricultural, demographic, economic and social indicators and interviews with leaders of local communities or in some cases with mayors of municipalities (pool opinion) was made. The comparison included the determined types and subtypes of the sample of rural areas.

Results of the analysis of agricultural structures, demographic situation and employment by the sector of economic activity

The analysis of agricultural structures is based on the inhabitants inventory data from 1991, because the data from agricultural inventory 2000 are still not available for lower territorial units. It can be concluded that agricultural structure situation among the defined rural area types does not differ a lot. In all three basic types similar problems can be perceived (with a bit varied intensity), which are also the main problems of Slovenian agriculture. Those which are the most severe are: imperfect age structure of agricultural population, small farm structure and scattered land structure, low share of assured farm successors and low productivity of farming. In all three basic types we can find also natural obstacles for agriculture, namely: high altitude, steep incline of the land, sharper climatic conditions or marshy land.

For suburban areas are characteristic the lowest percentage of full-time farms (19 %) among all basic types and a big share of farms smaller than 2 ha Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA); (42 %). On such farms older people farm or they are part-time farms. A share of aged farms in this type is also the biggest (12.6 %) among basic types. Despite of the favourable aging structure of total population in those areas, aging structure of agricultural population is unfavourable and shows that there is no reproduction of agricultural population anymore. Agricultural families in suburban areas are the smallest (3.5 members/farm) among all rural types as well as the number of assured successors (36 %). On the other hand, because of the limited agricultural land in suburban areas stockbreeding here is intensive. A number of livestock units (LU) on a farm and also in the area is here the highest (4.1 LU/farm and 1.1 LU/ha UAA). In the future in this type the number of farms probably will not decrease significantly, people will farm beside employment and turn to more intensive and economical farming productions (horticulture, vegetable and fruit production).

From the demographic point of view suburban areas are marked with constant population growth (from 1869 the number of inhabitants increased by 147 %). Of course those areas have the highest population density among the rural area types. The average population density of sample suburban areas is 293 inhabitants/km² and also average incline and latitude are the most advantageous. In view of employment of inhabitants by the sectors of economic activity here predominates employment in secondary

activities (industry, trade,...) and among basic types we can find the highest share of employees in tertiary and quaternary activities. That also means better paid jobs and better economic situation in the area compared with other two types of rural areas. Because of the town nearness, where the offer of jobs is greater, in suburban areas a share of daily migration is high as well (77 %).

Typical rural areas are in almost all analyses the most vital part of the Slovenian countryside. In this type we can find the most favourable farm structure, which will in the future still improve because certain farms will stop farming. The data show that in this rural area type the share of part-time farms is the biggest among the types (54 %). This is extra characteristic for flat land areas. In typical rural areas the aging structure of agricultural population is also the most favourable and indicates that there is still satisfactory reproduction of the agricultural population present in this type. Agricultural families here are the most numerous (4.1 members/family) and have also the highest share of assured successors and the highest percentage of farms over 5 ha UAA (or the smallest part of farms under 2 ha UAA). The number of inhabitants of this type has increased since 1869, but with smaller intensity than in suburban areas. Since 1869 the number has increased by 15.3 %, the most (as expected) in flat land areas, where the highest population density (107 inhabitants/km²) among the subtypes of typical rural areas is observed. The aging structure of total population (as for agricultural population) in this type is the most favourable and even better than the Slovenian average. The majority of employees work in a secondary sector and the tertiary and quaternary sectors here are almost halved in comparison with suburban areas, but higher than a share of those sectors in the depopulation areas. A share of daily migration here is 65 %.

Depopulation areas are the most problematic part of the Slovenian countryside, from agricultural and from demographic points of view. In depopulation areas, when compared with other basic types, a share of full-time farms is the highest (25 %) as well as the share of employees in primary sector (40 % of all employment). Further, those areas mark the worst aging structure of total and agricultural population. The number of inhabitants decreases constantly, since 1869 by 27 %. A problem is the most conspicuous in the areas defined as areas of intensive depopulation. The situation is getting better a bit just in the areas of potential depopulation, where a small number increase is perceived. Depopulation areas have the lowest population density among the three basic types (45 inhabitants/km²). Intensity of stockbreeding here is the lowest (2.7 LU/farm and 0.6 LU/ha UAA), as is

the living standard on farms. In the future we can expect a greater decrease in number of farms, as a consequence of imperfect age structure of agricultural population and a small part of farms with assured successors (the lowest among the basic types). On the other hand, that can mean a possibility for a farm enlargement (if there will be interest in farming among young people), or as the worst possibility, gradual farming discontinuation which will lead to accelerated overgrowing of agricultural land and consecutive destruction of cultural landscape. A share of daily migration here is 54 %.

The key results of the questionnaire, conducted among the leaders of local communities are/as follows:

- LCs are relatively well equipped with infrastructure, the best in suburban areas, as expected, a bit worse in the depopulation areas and surprisingly the worst in typical rural areas. The biggest problems are still with drinking water supply, construction of the sewage system and cleaning devices as well as the management of the local road system.
- Sample LCs of all three type have rich organisation of diversified associations (tourist, fire, cultural, sport etc.) and are also well equipped with places for cultural and sport activities. Service's supply is a bit worse, but the basic supply is more or less assured. The average distance to important institutions (municipality, primary school, kindergarten, clinic, bank, working places etc.) is the largest in depopulation areas, smaller in typical rural areas and the smallest in suburban areas near towns. It is the same with average number of daily bus and train links.
- According to the opinions of the leaders suburban areas have the best development possibilities in trade and services, typical rural areas in trade and tourism and depopulation areas in agriculture, trade and tourism.
- According to the leaders' opinions the essential measures must be undertaken in the spheres of building and modernization of the roads, improvement of economic situation in agriculture, lack of working places, and in the area of the development of rural tourism.
- Social contacts and gatherings of people are still frequent. The most frequently forms of contacts of rural people are cultural and social entertainments and joining numerous associations and organised actions. Such contacts are according to the opinions of LC's leaders very important for community and its development.
- In around 65 % of all sample LCs people have discontinued farming. The main reasons for this process are: unsatisfactory economic situation in agriculture, better possibilities for young people in other economic activi-

ties and aging of farmers. This is the process most of LC's leaders consider as negative for the environment and society as a whole.

- For approximately 65 % of sample LCs farm land overgrowing is characteristic. The process is the most intensive in depopulation areas (the average degree is 26 % since 1970) and less in suburban and typical rural areas (average in both 11 % since 1970). The main reasons for agricultural land overgrowing are: farms use only better quality land - machinery cultivation, uneconomical farming on the lower quality land, aging of farmers and discontinuation of farming activities.

- In all three basic rural areas types we can find some free housing capacities. The most of them are in the depopulation areas (average 11 %), less in typical rural areas (3 %) and almost no free capacities in suburban areas (0.6 %). In the suburban areas there is also the highest interest in buying building parcels and changing agricultural land into building parcels. The smallest such interest is present among the inhabitants of depopulation areas.

- The key agricultural problems in sample rural areas are: aging of agricultural population, small scattered farms, unsatisfactory economic situation in agriculture, big share of areas with natural obstacles for agriculture and overgrowing of agricultural land.

- The number of inhabitants has increased in 43 % of sample rural areas (the largest share in typical rural areas, less in suburban areas which are already densely populated and the smallest share of all in the depopulation areas), in 28 % of sample LCs the population stagnates and in the equal share of LCs the population shows a decrease (the largest percentage is noted in the depopulation areas - in 60 % of them).

- The main problems of the sample of LCs/municipalities are first of all insufficient financing of building and maintenance of infrastructure and implementation of other development activities, incomplete and inadequately developed infrastructure, and development discrimination (heavily enforcement of interests) of the LCs, which are the structural part of bigger municipalities.

- Proposals of the leaders of LCs to branch of profession and policy who prepare and implement development activities are: at least intervention of policy to profession as possible, experts must work more on terrain and less in offices, in the time before accession to the EU the state has to devote more help to agriculture and rural areas to enable them better competitive positions, some specialities in the area have to be considered and their natural potential have to be exploited more (with considering of environment), more cooperation and partnerships are expected on all levels,

complicated bureaucratic proceedings have to be simplified and informing about available kinds of help from different funds has to be improved, criteria for approving projects have to be unified, more attentions have to be given to education of rural people, administrative structures have to be more uniform and more effective and planning of implementation and financing of development activities have to be long-term.

- The main remarks: unfinished and not uniform criteria for approving and financing the projects, after the beginning of development activities financial source often dries up or measure is cancelled, complicated and lasting processes of spatial documents acceptance, politics has too large influence on profession and there are also parties interests, too large state centralisation, not enough contacts on the different administrative levels and not sufficient professional help to local communities with preparation and implementation of the development programmes.

Summary

On the basis of all analyses performed, it can be concluded that division of rural areas into three basic types and further into subtypes in our typology is reasonable. The differences between defined types of rural areas are significant from different point of views and have to be considered in rural development planning and preparation of a state long-term rural development policy. For rural areas of significant characteristics with particular problems and situations, suitable and accordant rural development measures have to be prepared and implemented.

Zaključek

Na osnovi vseh izvedenih analiz lahko ugotovimo, da je smiselna razdelitev slovenskih podeželjskih območij na tri osnovne tipe (in nadalje na podpise), ki smo jo zasnovali z našo tipologijo.

Razlike med definiranimi tipi podeželjskih območij so očitne in pomembne zaradi različnih vidikov proučevanja in jih je potrebno upoštevati pri načrtovanju razvoja podeželja in pripravi dolgoročne državne razvojne politike za podeželje.

Potrebno je pripraviti in izvrševati ustrezne in skladne razvojne ukrepe za podeželjska območja s posebnimi značilnostmi; problemi in situacijami.

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