

Dolina Soče

SOČA EVERGREEN

DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING STRATEGY FOR SOČA VALLEY TOURISM 2025+

Summary

I FEEL
SLOVENIA

DRAFTING PROCESS



3
surveys
with 238
responders

5
workshops
with more than
260 attendants

6
in-depth
interviews

2
public
presentations
and 37 written
responses

more than **10**
coordination
meetings

THE SOČA VALLEY AS A DESTINATION

Bovec, Kobarid, Tolmin, Kanal ob Soči



STRATEGY CONTENT

1

**ANALYSIS
AND DIAGNOSIS**

2

**STRATEGY with
vision and position**

3

**DEVELOPMENT
PLAN**

4

IMPLEMENTATION

Challenge 1

Restarting tourism after COVID-19



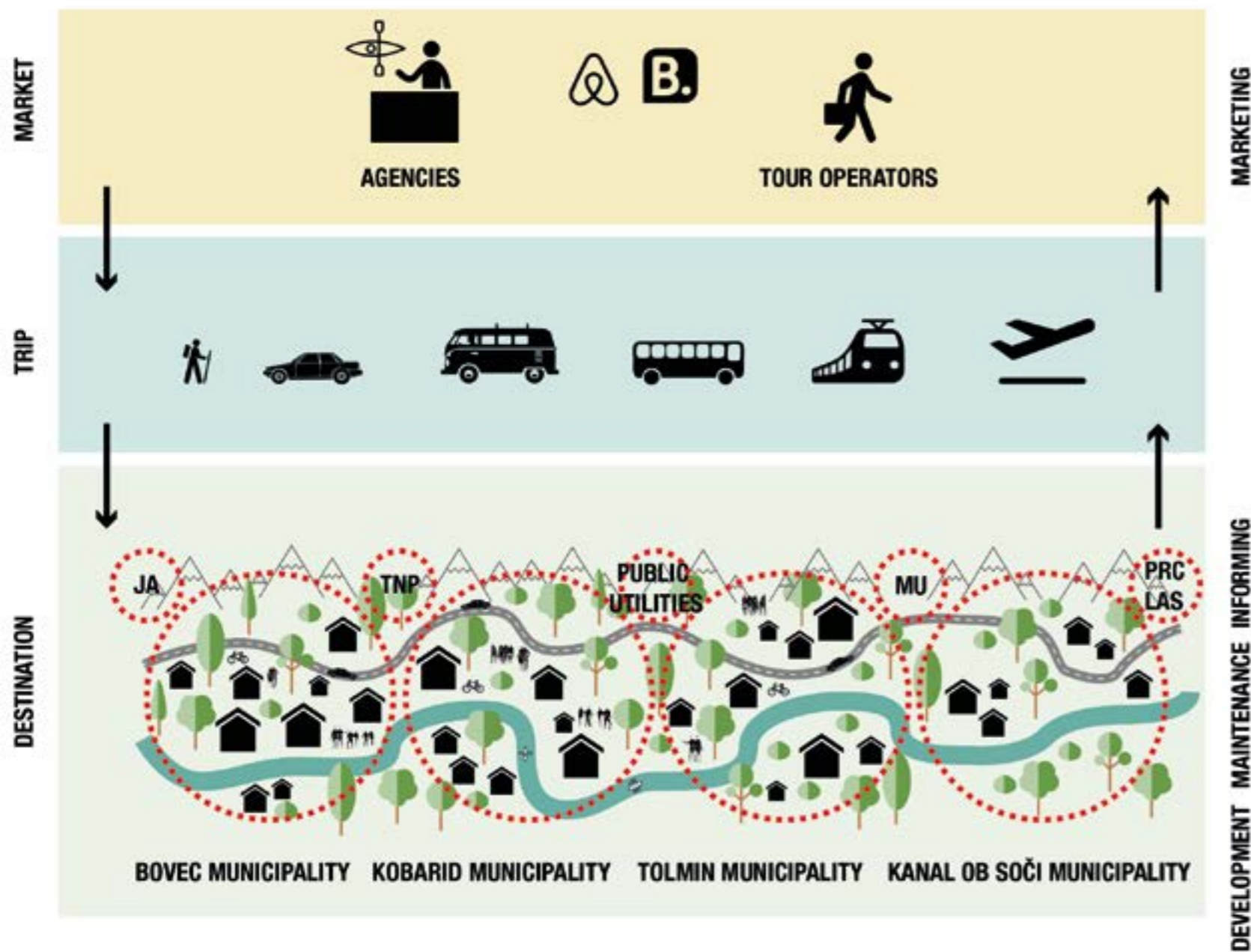
Slovenian Tourist Board predicts a 60% drop in overnight stays compared to 2019

WTTC predicts a 20–30% drop

Soča Valley Tourist Board predicts about a 50% drop, depending upon border closings, and 2–3 years to recover

Challenge 2

The destination's fragmented nature and complexity

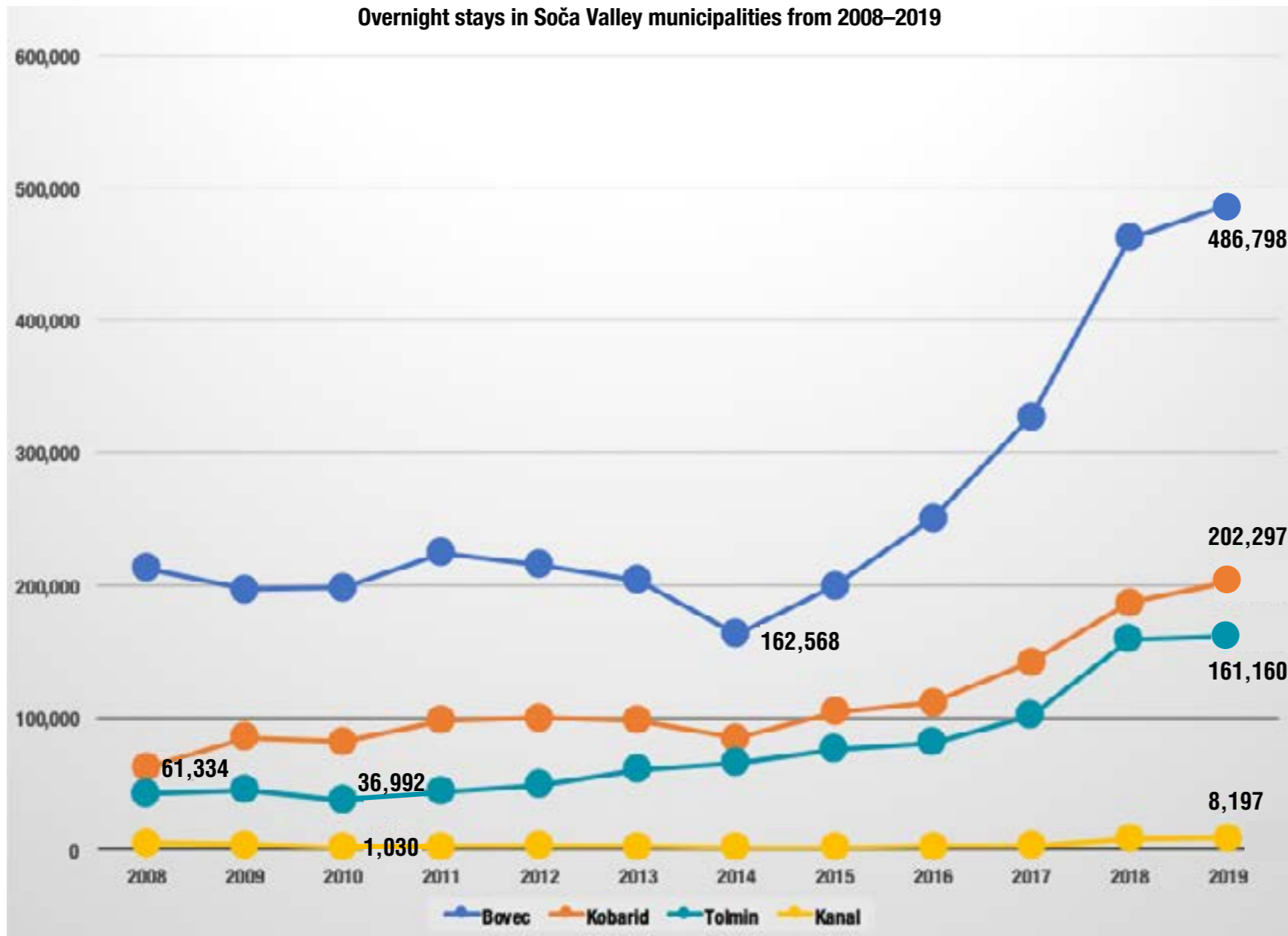


- 4 municipalities
- > 800 accommodation providers
- circa 13,300 beds
- > 40 agencies
- > 300,000 tourists
- > 800,000 overnight stays

Challenge 3

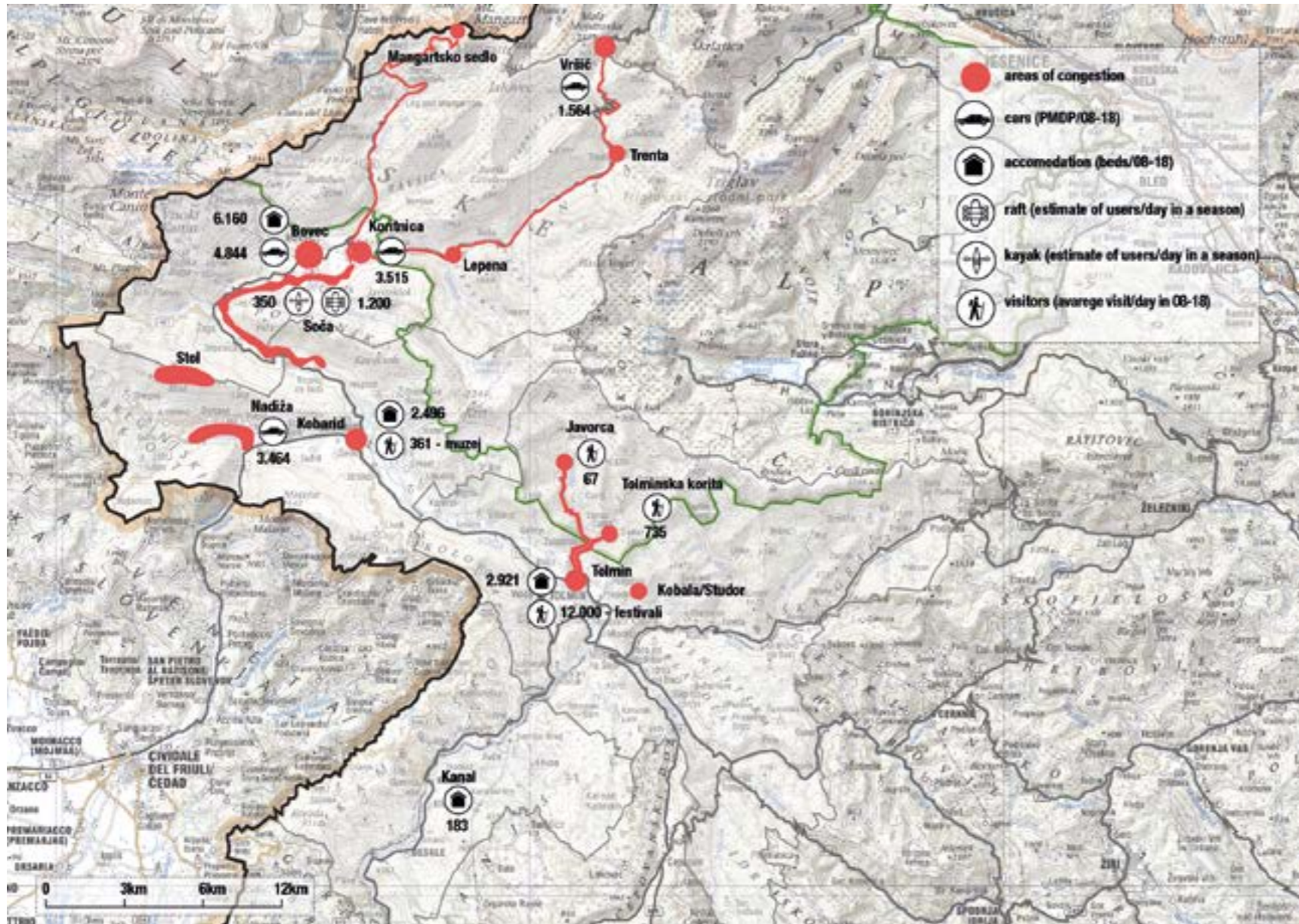
Managing tourist flows and hotspots

Increasing overnight stays from 2008 to 2019



Challenge 4

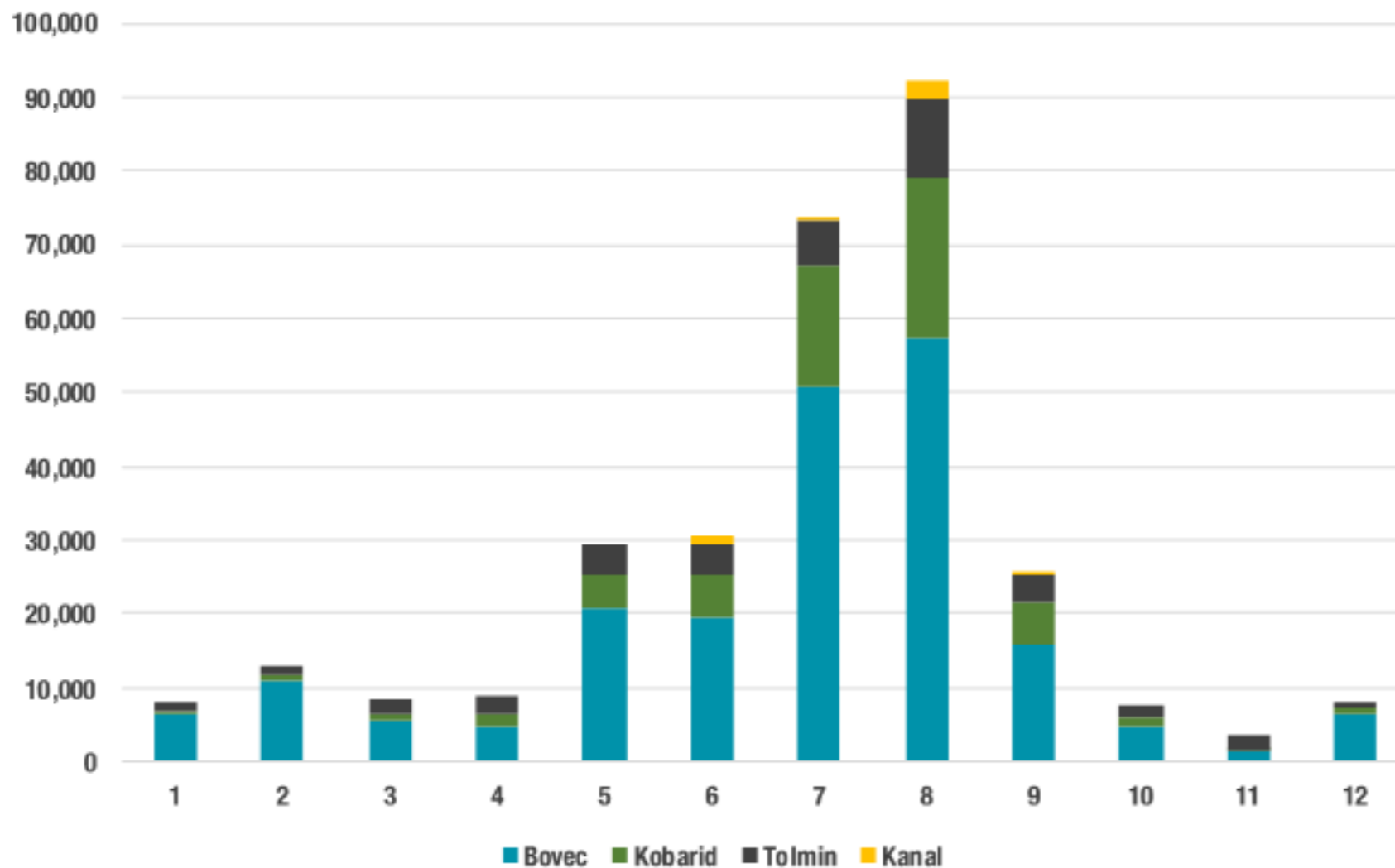
Managing tourist flows and hotspots



Between 25,000 and 30,000 tourists per day, but 18,300 residents

Challenge 5

The destination's seasonal nature and the professionalization of tourism



- 87% arrivals and overnight stays from May to September
- 57% over all overnight stays in July and August

Overnight stays in the Soča Valley's municipalities in 2018

Challenge 6

Quality of services and experiences



Travelling to a mature destination increases visitors' expectations



THE SOČA VALLEY 2025+ VISION

THE SOČA VALLEY 2025+

will be the

**LEADING YEAR-ROUND
ALPINE DESTINATION,**

**with with a range of outdoor
and heritage experiences between
the Alps and the Mediterranean.**



**comprehensive
range of outdoor
and cultural
experiences**



**evergreen
destination**



**the Mediterranean
backyard of
the Julian Alps**

WHAT DO WE AIM TO ACHIEVE?



Objective 1



Objective 2



Objective 3



Objective 4

Restart after COVID-19

- Setting standards and redesigning tourist services
- Keeping jobs and increasing businesses' flexibility
- Adapted marketing aimed at maintaining the destination's reputation in foreign markets
- Redesigned approaches to more clearly communicating green priorities

Year-round approach

- Increasing tourist traffic outside of the peak tourist season
- Increasing the number of full-time tourism employees
- Maintaining our reputation in traditional markets and increasing it in new ones

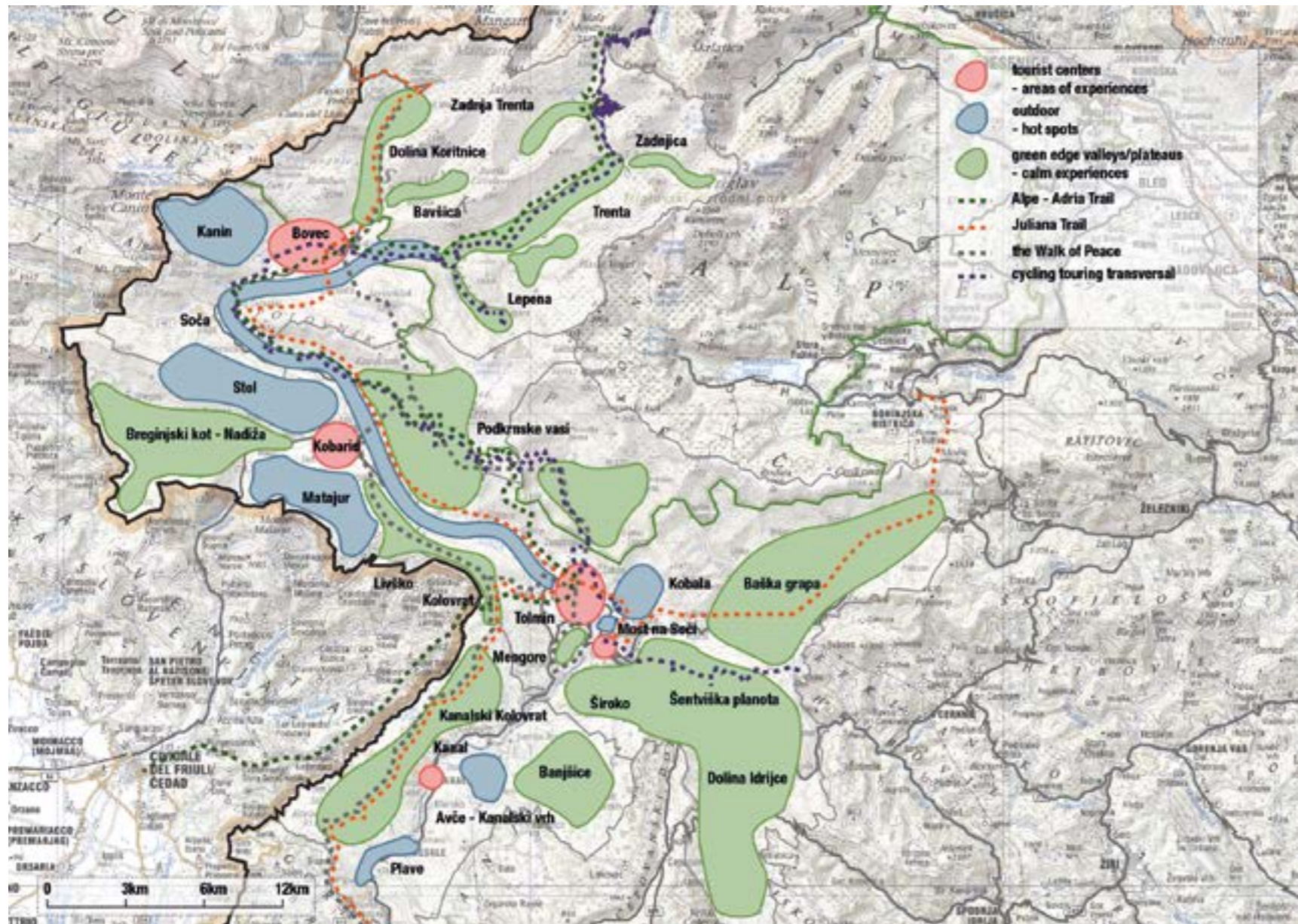
Quality and Value

- Increasing added value and the amount tourists spend per day
- Increasing the quality and competitiveness of experiences offered
- Quality local product's branding and identity
- At the very least maintaining the average length of stay

Sustainable Management

- Reducing visitors' carbon footprint
- Increasing green awareness and the sustainable operation of all stakeholders
- Established systems and methods of effectively managing tourist flows
- Preserving the valley's identity and heritage

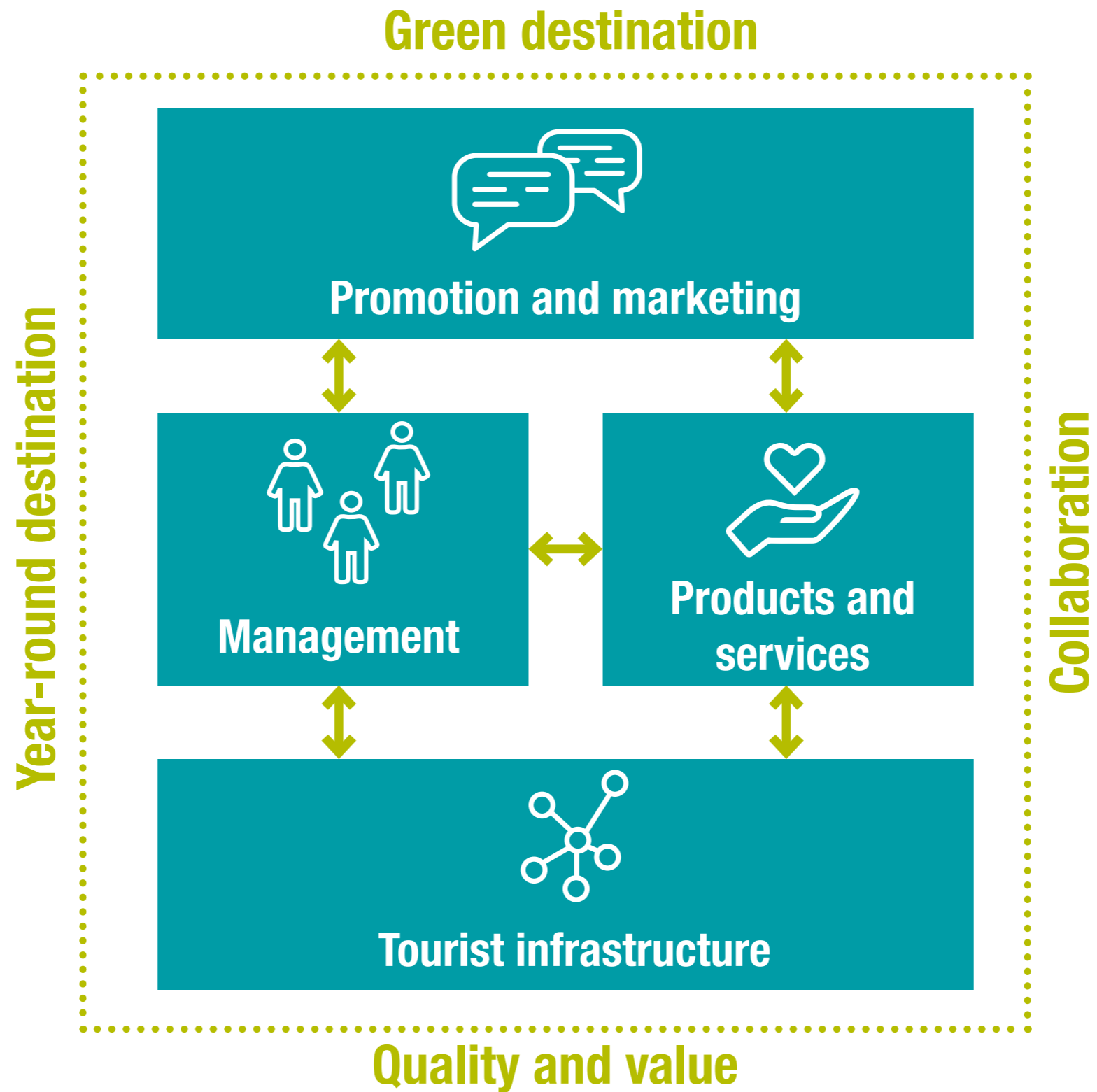
SUSTAINABLE SPATIAL CONCEPT



- Tourist Hubs
- Outdoor hotspots
- Green side valleys and Alpine meadows
- Long-distance hiking trails
- The Slovenian Mountain Hiking Trail

STRATEGIC MODEL

with 4 priority areas





Tourist infrastructure

Objective:

Continued improvements and upgrades to tourist infrastructure and management systems, and a integrated approach to sustainable spatial management through the Soča Valley

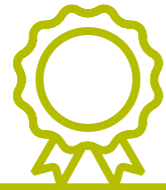
Measures:

1. Infrastructure and coordinated regulations for outdoor activities
2. Infrastructure at points of interest
3. Attracting investors for strategic investments
4. Encouraging small-scale investments in businesses – selectively
5. A system of sustainable mobility throughout the Soča Valley
6. Comprehensive spatial and environmental planning in support of the green destination



Tourist infrastructure and plans

Results:



Increased quality of services and user experience for all visitors



Cycling network:
50 km of paths through the valley,
5 MTB areas,
1 long-distance trail,
3 family-friendly trails



3 long-distance trails and 300 km of marked, well-maintained, and GPS-supported hiking trails



A common approach to take off and landing sites for paragliders, with improved logistics



At least 10 public natural and cultural heritage sites upgraded



A new location for TIC Tolmin and establishment of TIC Most na Soči



Establishing systematic monitoring, and visitor management of hot spots



Established common mechanisms and management regimes for visitors, traffic, activities, and spatial and environmental management

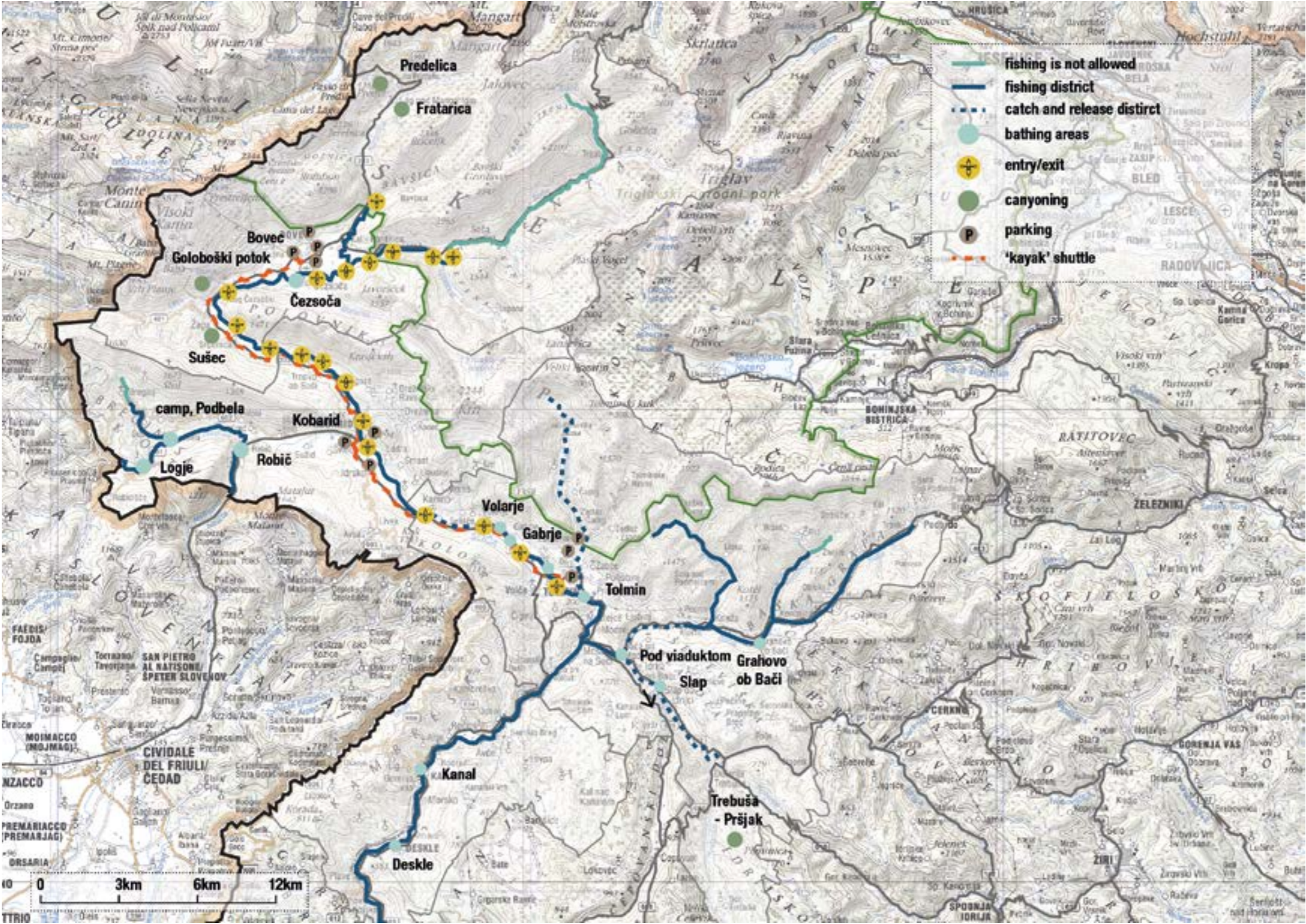


At least 45 microinvestments supported

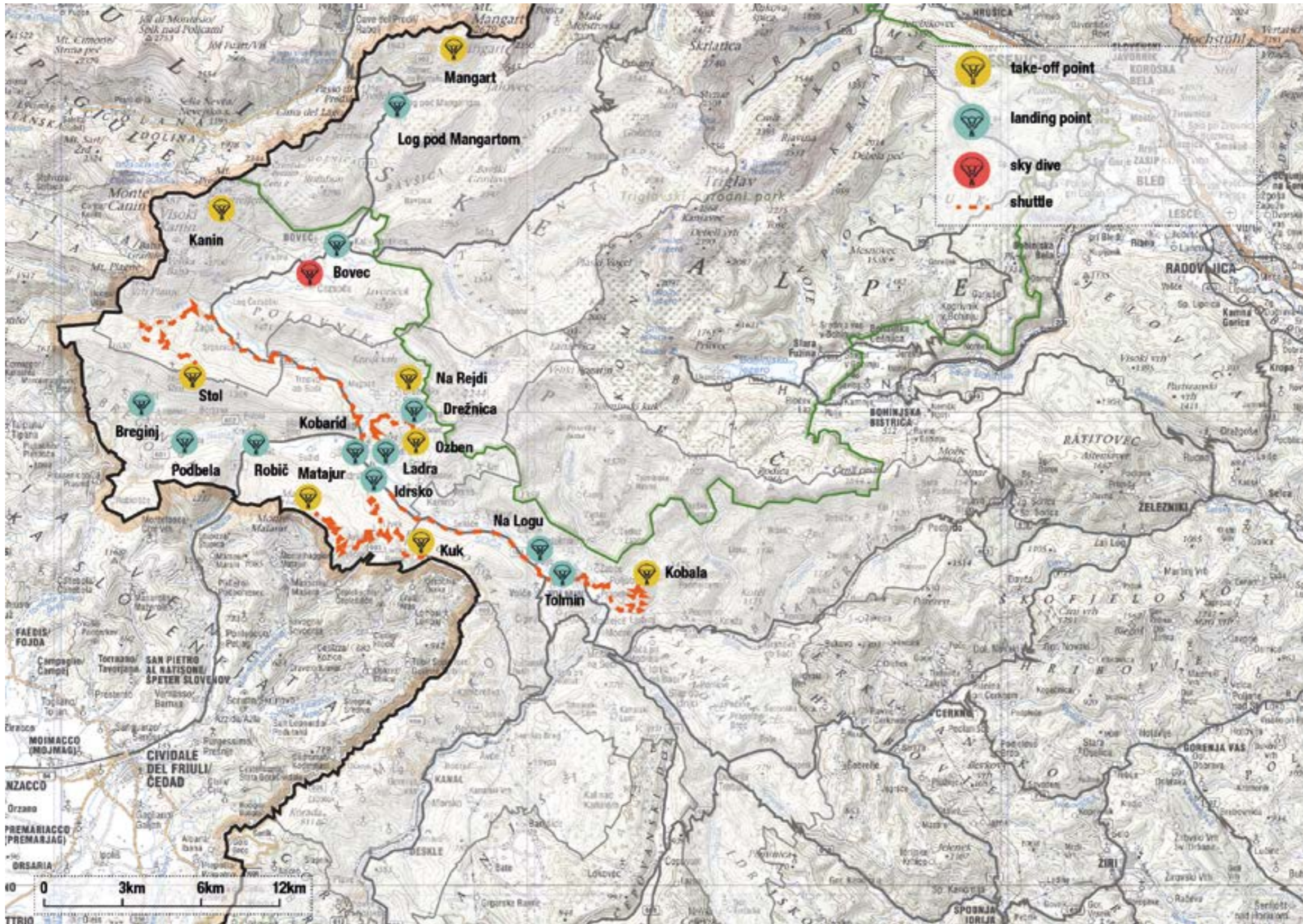


Acquired investors for half of public-private planned projects

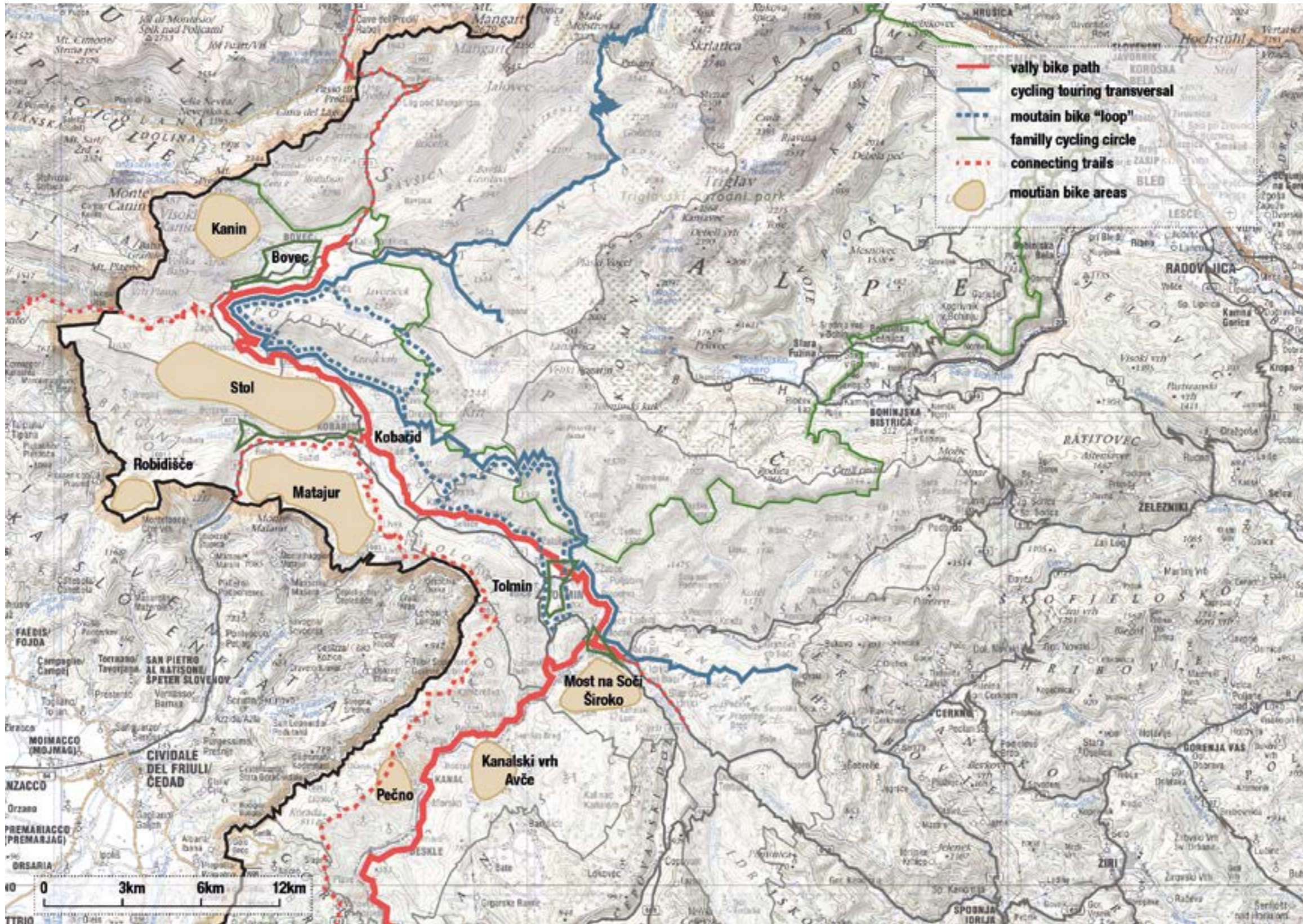
Water sports



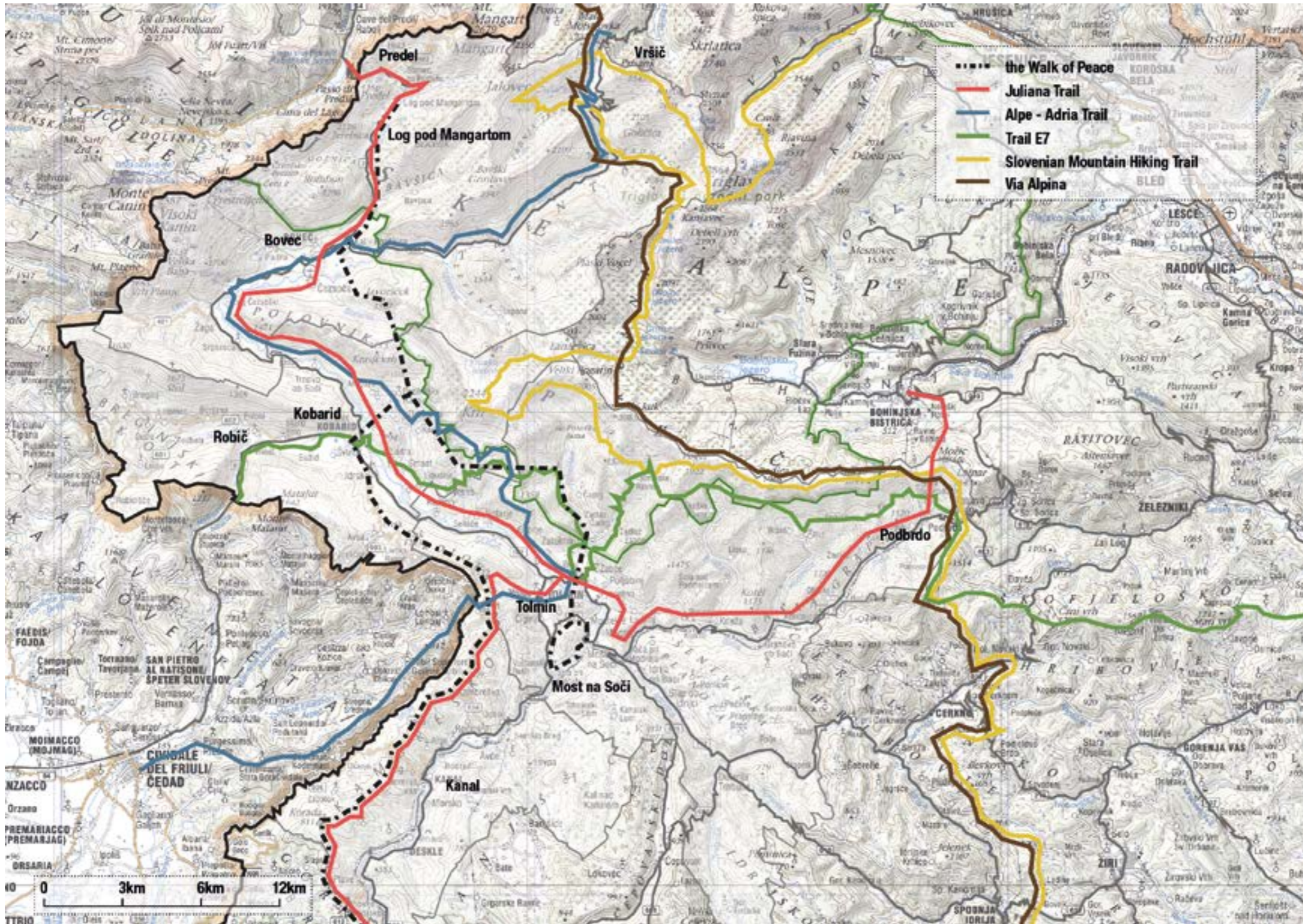
Paragliding



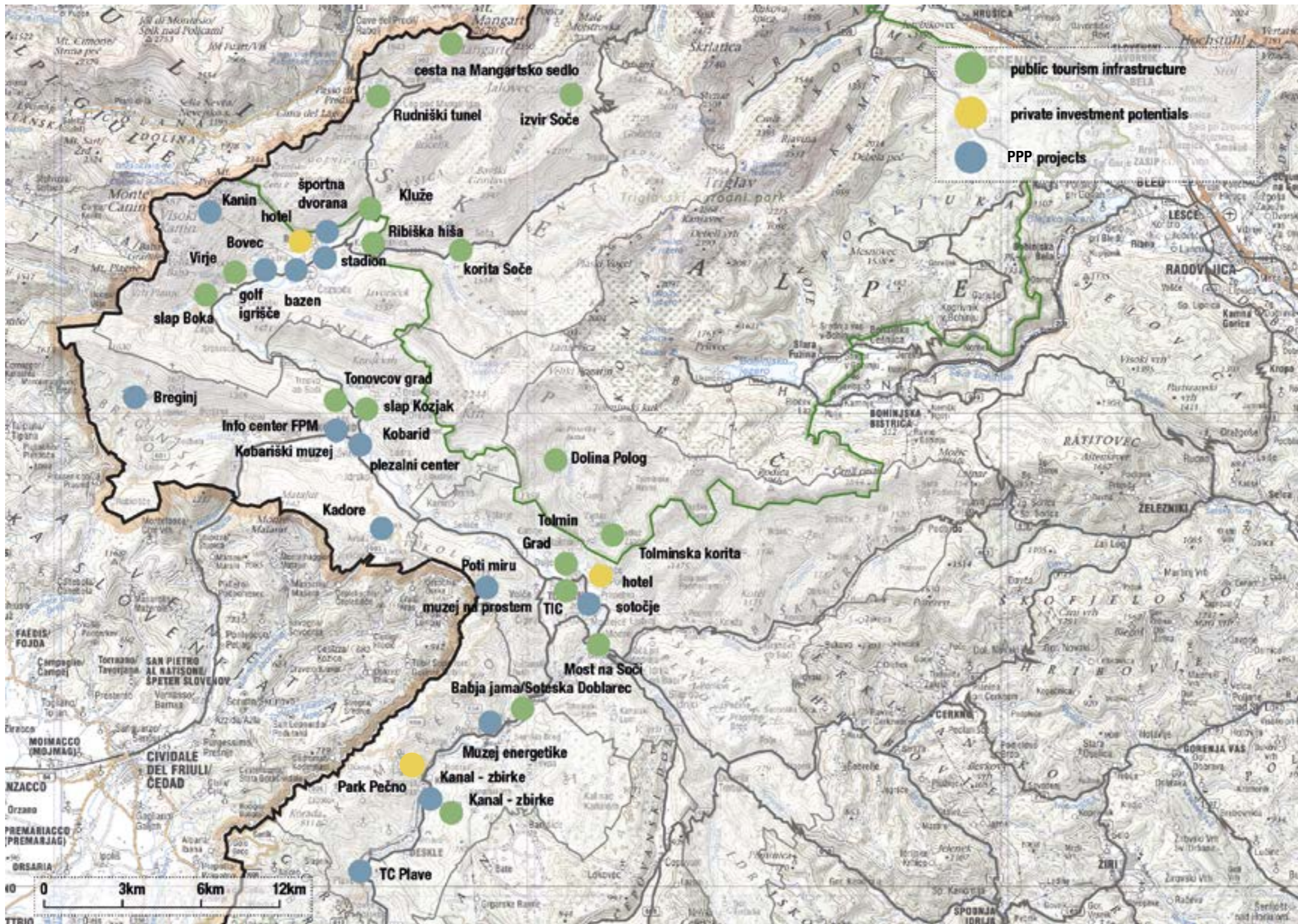
Cycling



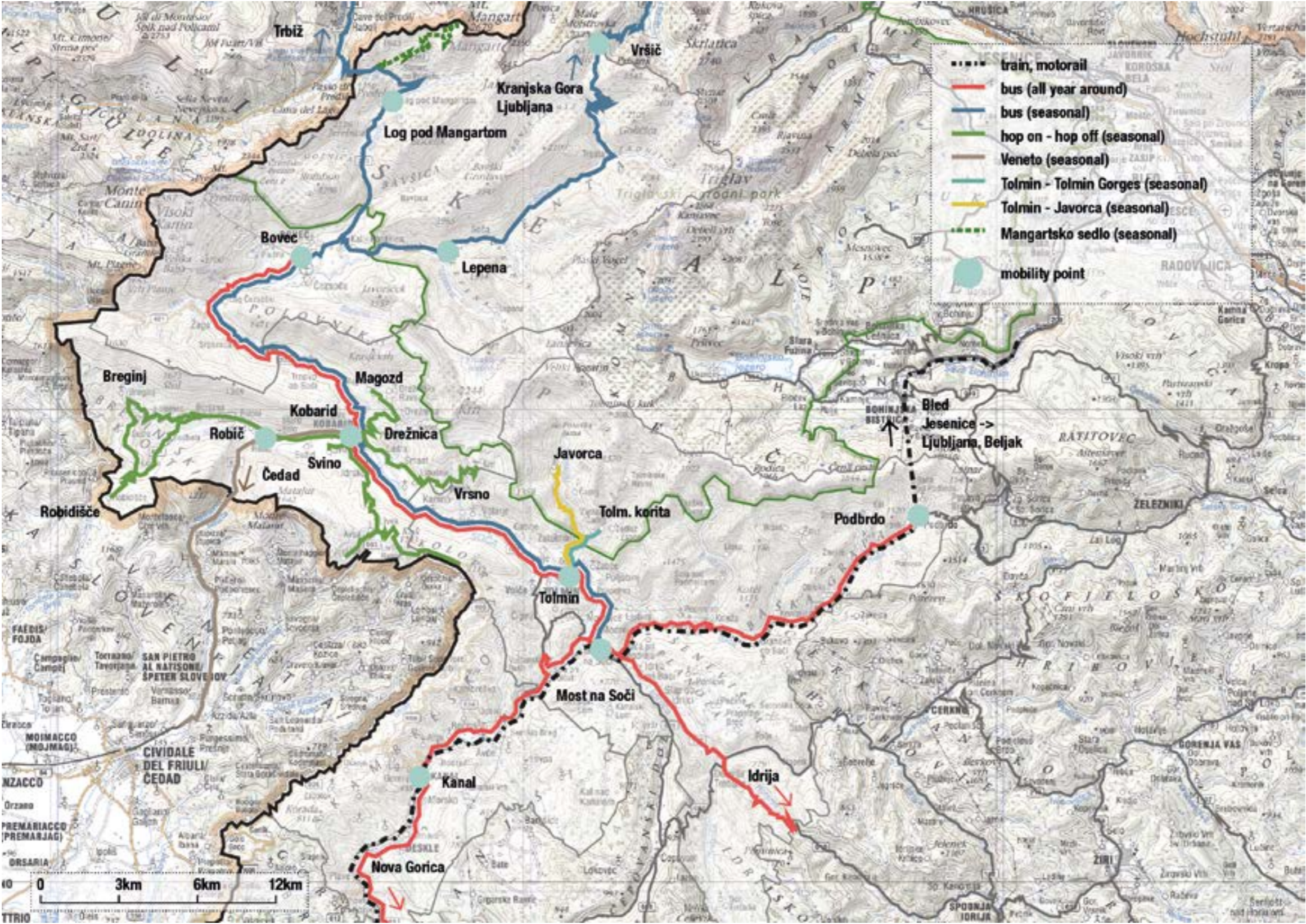
Hiking



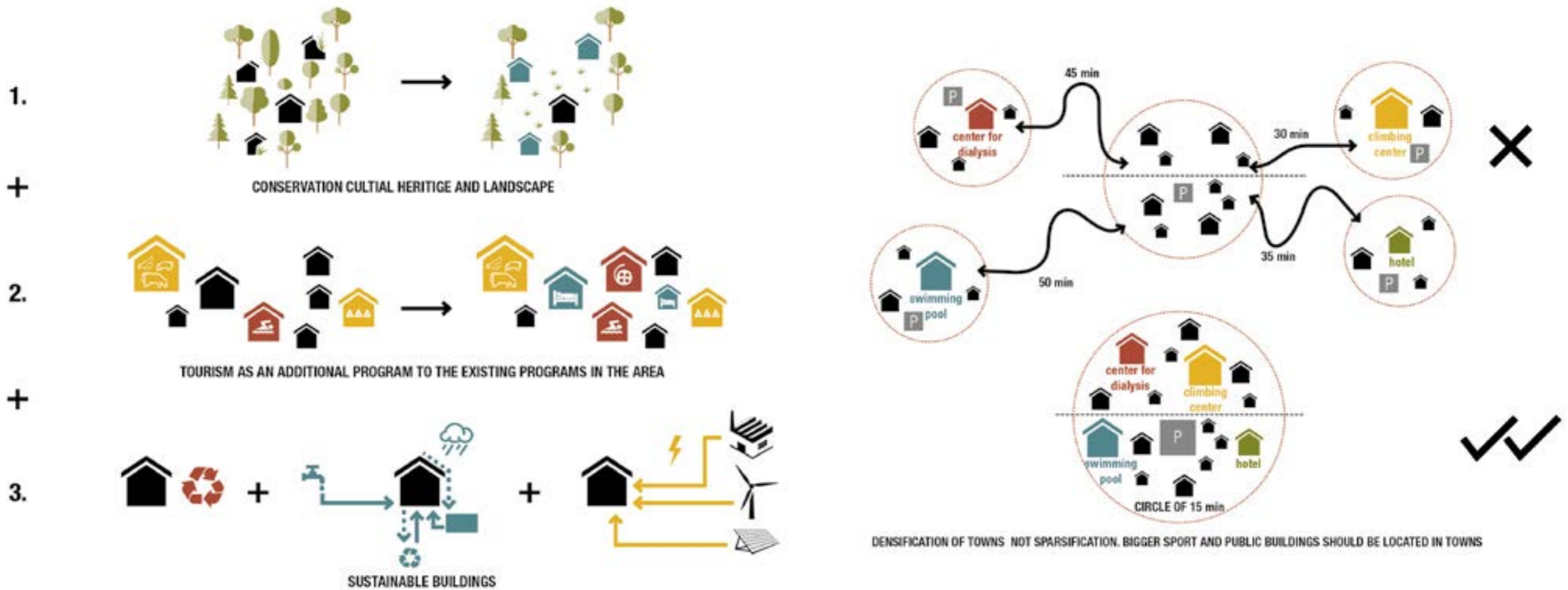
Investments in points of interest and major public, PPP and private infrastructure projects



Sustainable mobility



Guidelines for the spatial development of tourism and land use change





Products and Services

Objective:

A lively, well-designed, comprehensive range of products and services for the Soča Valley, with more supply than demand, recognizable hospitality, and a strong network of interrelated providers

Measures:

- 1. Making a range of products and services for the whole year**
- 2. Increasing the quality of products and services, and repositioning prices**
- 3. Developing 5-star experiences and increasing the meaningfulness of existing products and services for visitors, including the product and service deficit**
- 4. Networking providers and creating a comprehensive range of products and services**
- 5. Improving culinary products and services**



Products and Services

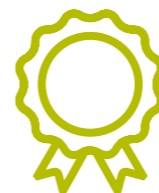
Results:



The connected provider network SOČA EVERGREEN TEAM, 6 x product group, experience manager



Joint efforts to extend the season: weekend deals, season openings (kayaking, fishing, etc.), New Year's packages



An improved range of products and services, with directed development of outdoor products (infrastructure, quality, regulation)



Improved cultural tourism programs with regular schedules



New modules for experiences and services targeting wellness



Common Soča Valley/Julian Alps brand with a quality certificate: 40 different services, products, and experiences



The SOČA EVERGREEN Team Building scheme: 20 different providers supported



Three new 5-star experiences according to the STB criteria



Integrated culinary products with year-long operation and a popular international culinary festival



Developing a model of marketing and promoting typical ingredients and dishes from the Soča Valley: 1 campaign per year, e.g. "Tolminc on every table", and a pilot project of collaboration with the herder community

IMPROVED RANGE OF OUTDOOR PRODUCTS



DEVELOPING CULTURAL TOURISM





Management

Objective:

With partners for the professional and effective management of the Soča Valley as a destination

Measures:

- 1. Strengthening the management of the destination**
- 2. Human resources development for tourism businesses**
- 3. The excellence of Soča Valley: ensuring standards of excellence throughout the destination**
- 4. Research, development, and innovation**
- 5. Establishing partnerships with other destinations**



Management Results:



Soča Valley Tourist Board = a strong, professional DMMO with a bolstered development and management function, and with stable financing



Platform for destination collaboration, the SOČA EVERGREEN Partnership, including SOČA VALLEY AMBASSADORS



A permanent program for acquiring and training employees for the needs of a tourist economy



Destination and provider quality brands obtained



A system for advising tourism providers



Assured coordinated development of tourist hubs and green side valleys, meadows, and plateaus



Management scheme

Council of Soča Valley Tourist Board

The director of Soča Valley Tourist Board

BOARD OF EXPERTS,
along with destination ambassadors

DESTINATION COORDINATION in a 3-month
expanded collegium of mayors from the Soča Valley

PROMOTION AND MARKETING	INFORMATION & DISTRIBUTION	INFRASTRUCTURE AND TOURIST FLOWS	DEVELOPMENT, QUALITY AND INNOVATION	TRAINING PERSONNEL (RDA)
Managing experiences*	TIC Bovec	Monitoring visits and collaborating in designing management regimes for outdoor activities and traffic*	Product development and support for product groups*	Tourist guides and interpreters
Internet and social media	TIC Kobarid	Maintenance of hiking trails and other infrastructure in agreement with municipalities	Managing the local product quality brand*	Training existing human resources (RDA)
Marketing	TIC Tolmin	Managing points of interest	Managing the green scheme	Working with young people and providing scholarships
Promotional events	TIC Kanal	Developing and managing a visitor's card	Directing the development of microdestinations*	Tourist startup accelerator* (RDA)
Media, PR and crisis communication	Contractual TIC: Podbrdo, Most na Soči*	Planning and constructing new tourist infrastructure	Undertaking and leading projects	HRD for tourism (RDA)
Brand management*	Booking center		Advising tourism providers*	
	Information and communication platform		Research, analysis, and strategy	

Coordination **Networking** **Collaboration** **Inclusion**

INDICATIVE PRODUCT GROUPS,

proposed and managed by providers themselves (groups form dynamically, and are adapted to providers' needs and interests)



TASK FORCES for targeted campaigns and projects



Promotion and marketing

Objective:

Strengthen the Soča Valley's position as the Mediterranean backyard to the Julian Alps, the perfect place for a visit all year round.

Measures:

- 1. Setting up a comprehensive communication platform for the destination and elaborating the brand architecture and system for the Soča Valley.**
- 2. More precise profiling and familiarization with target groups and visitor interests.**
- 3. Comprehensive development of internal communication and marketing within the destination itself (internal communication, strengthening partnerships, Soča Evergreen Team).**
- 4. 360-degree development and management of owned media (content marketing).**
- 5. Comprehensive and targeted management of digital and traditional media.**
- 6. Management and development of a reservation system.**



Promotion and marketing

Results:



Strengthened reputation of the Soča Valley as a destination all year round, with increased visits outside of the high season (June, July, August)



A common reservation system for marketing and sales experiences, and increased revenues from selling experiences



Achieving objectives for product campaigns that target specific target groups in collaboration with the local providers



Sustainable behavior of both providers and guests

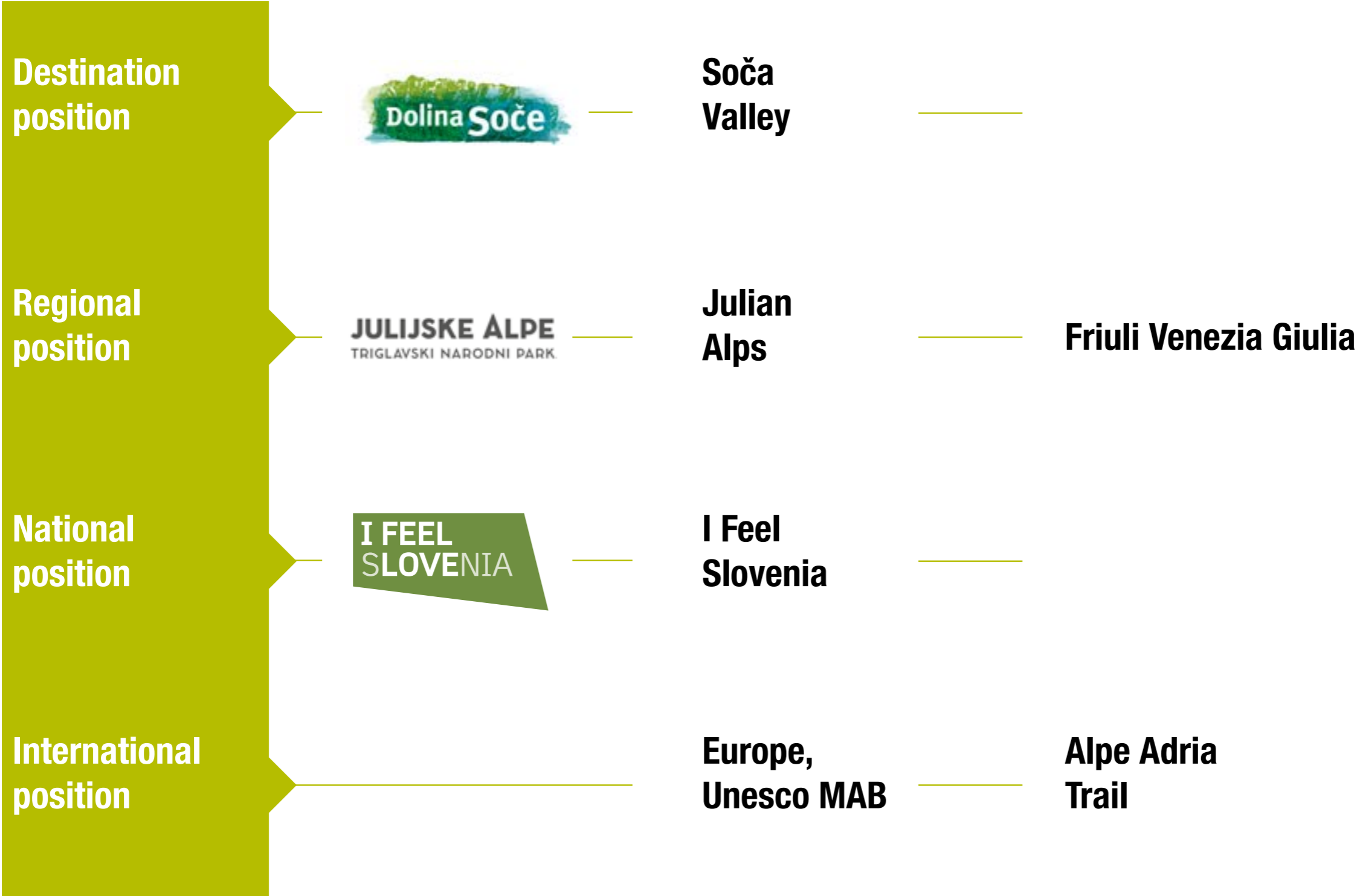


Regular communication and networking with providers within the destination (SOČA EVERGREEN PARTNERSHIP, SOČA EVERGREEN AMBASSADORS)



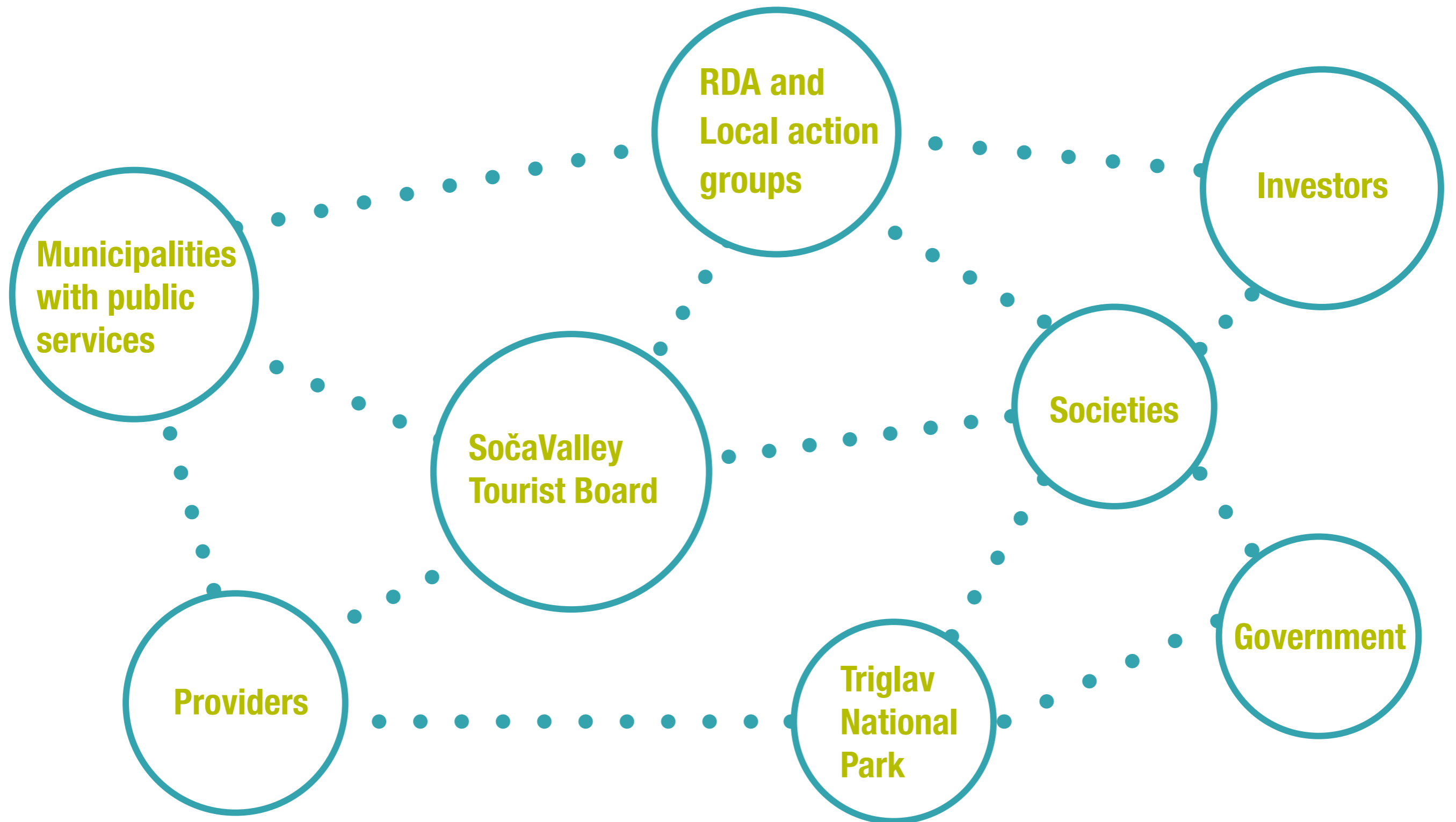
Regular communication with residents in the Soča Valley in order to increase hospitality

Positioning the Soča Valley



IMPLEMENTATION

joint responsibility SOČA EVERGREEN PARTNERSHIP



TODAY

A destination for outdoor activities

**A popular destination for water
(adrenaline) sports**

Summer destination

Amount

Tourism = supplemental income

Scattered and unconnected

Vulnerable and conventional

SVTB: Promotion and marketing

THE SOČA VALLEY 2025+ SOČA EVERGREEN

**A destination of diverse
experiences**

**The Mediterranean backyard of the Alps
for “green” and active getaways**

Year-round destination

Quality and value

Tourism = the principle profession

**Comprehensive, collaborative,
and well-managed**

Stronger and open to innovation

**SVTB: Destination marketing
and management**



THE SOČA VALLEY 2025+ SOČA EVERGREEN

List of abbreviations used

DMMO = Destination Management and Marketing Organization

STB = Slovenian Tourist Board

SV = Soča Valley

SVTB = Soča Valley Tourist Board (Turizem Doline Soče)

SVDC = Soča Valley Development Center (Posoški razvojni center)

TIC = Tourist Information Center

WTTC = World Travel & Tourism Council

RDA = Regional Development Agency

Summary of the Development and Marketing Strategy for Soča Valley Tourism 2025+

Client: Turizem Dolina Soče, Rupa 17, SI-5230 Bovec

For: Janko Humar, director

Project team:

- K&Z, Development Consulting I.t.d. (development, investment, and project planning)

Slavka Zupan

- NEA CULPA I.t.d. (marketing and development in tourism)

Neja Petek, Petra Goneli

- GOODPLACE I.t.d. (development in tourism)

Jan Klavora

- Presledek. (architecture and spatial planning)

Vid Zabel, Martin Kruh

Maps: Vid Zabel

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