



EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION
LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

6th Session – 2018-2019

APPLICATION FORM

Presentation

The European Landscape Convention aims to promote the protection, management and planning of landscapes and to bring together European co-operation in this field. It is the first international treaty exclusively devoted to all dimensions of European landscape. Taking into account the landscape, natural and cultural values of the territory, it contributes to promoting the quality of life and well-being of Europeans.

The Resolution on the Rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, draws attention to the fact that Article 11 of the Convention institutes the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe and that it is in keeping with the work carried out by the Council of Europe concerning human rights, democracy and sustainable development. It effectively promotes the territorial dimension of human rights and democracy by acknowledging the importance of measures taken to improve the landscape for people's living conditions.

Opened to the Parties to the Convention, the Award is intended to raise civil society's awareness of the value of landscapes, of their role and of changes to them. Its objective is to reward exemplary practical initiatives aimed at successful landscape quality objectives on the territories of the Parties to the Convention. The Award is conferred every two years and the files presenting applications must reach the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe.

At its meeting held in Strasbourg on 28-29 April 2008, the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) decided that applications should be submitted to the Council of Europe Secretariat through the Permanent Representations of the Parties to the Convention.

*We would be very grateful if you could send no later than **30 January 2019** the following elements of the candidature file (20 pages maximum) established for your country on the basis of the proposals forwarded to you by the Ministries:*

- by E-mail, the Application form completed to: maguelonne.dejeant-pons@coe.int; susan.moller@coe.int;*
- by post, a copy of the Application form completed together with a CD-Rom, DVD or USB key, containing the all the additional material to: Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons, Executive Secretary of the European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe, Agora (A4-15V), F- 67075 STRASBOURG Cedex.*

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Please note that:

- participation to the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe is only open to local and regional authorities and their groupings and non-governmental organisations, as stated in the Resolution CM/Res (2008)3, Appendix, Article 2;*
- the application form must be completed in all its parts, in one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe (English or French);*
- the materials submitted must be copyright-free, for use by the Council of Europe in communications aimed at promoting the Award or any other publications or activities relating to the Convention. The Council of Europe undertakes to cite the authors' names;*
- files that are incomplete or fail to comply with the rules will not be taken into consideration.*

For further information please visit the Landscape Award section of the Council of Europe website: www.coe.int/EuropeanLandscapeConvention

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I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

1. State	Republic of Slovenia
Represented by	Mr. Jure Leben,
<i>Address:</i>	Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning.. Dunajska 47, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
<i>Telephone:</i>	+3861 478 74 00
<i>E-mail:</i>	gp.mop@gov.si
2. Applicant	Municipality of Kozje
<i>Name of the local, regional authority(ies) or NGO(s)</i>	
Represented by	Ms / Mr Milenca Krajnc, major
<i>Address:</i>	Kozje 37 3260 Kozje
<i>Telephone:</i>	+3863 800 14 00
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II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJET

3. Name of the Project

Meadow orchards and landscape

4. Location of the Project

Municipality of Kozje, protected area of Kozjansko Regional Park, Slovenia

5. Summary of the Project (10-12 lines)

Meadow orchards are classified as a habitat type of agricultural landscape. Their key feature is extensive use of agricultural land that maintains traditional agricultural landscape and makes a significant contribution to the preservation of biodiversity. In Kozjansko, grass orchards belong to the Europe's most important conservation areas of Natura 2000 because they represent a natural environment for some rare and endangered bird species.

Changes in the use of agricultural land, such as consequent overgrowing, economic changes and changes in the social structure are factors that represent a threat to the habitat type. In the protected area of Kozjansko Regional Park we managed to stop those processes with active nature protection measures. Consequently, with this holistic approach, we returned nature protection, landscape, agricultural and economic values to the meadow orchards.

Meadow orchard and its apple became a symbol of nature protection that connects local community, protected area manager, non-governmental organizations and local residents.

6. Photo representing the Project (high definition – JPEG 350 dpi) and name of the author of the photo please

01 Teo Hrvoje Oršanič
02 Barbara Ploštajner
03 Teo Hrvoje Oršanič
04 Teo Hrvoje Oršanič
05 Teo Hrvoje Oršanič
06 Teo Hrvoje Oršanič
07 Vesna Zakonjšek
08 Barbara Ploštajner
09 Teo Hrvoje Oršanič
10 Teo Hrvoje Oršanič

7. Website of the Project *(if exists)*

<https://kozjanski-park.si>

III. CONTENT OF THE PROJECT

8. Start of the Project month year

The project must have been completed at least three years previously

9. Partners

Public institution Kozjanski park

10. Financing bodies

Public institution Kozjanski park
Ministry of the Environment and Spatial planning
Interreg IIIA programme
IPA
Leader programme

11. Central aims of the Project

- effective management of the areas in Natura 2000 (SPA Kozjansko, SI5000033) – taking care for the nature preservation of meadow orchards
- taking care for favourable condition of the qualifying species of birds
- preserving the appearance of the traditional landscape in Kozjansko
- active involvement of the local people in the implementation of nature conservation measures
- prevent overgrowing and cutting out meadow orchards
- revitalization of existing meadow orchards and planting new ones
- establishment of a gene bank with traditional and indigenous varieties of apples and pears
- helping with the cultivation of the inadequate rural architecture typical for the seventies
- reeconomisation of meadow orchards
- support to the healthy, sustainable production of food
- prevention of erosion

12. Outcome

- revitalized meadow orchards
- pruned fruit trees (thinning cut was performed on 11 000 trees)
- established gene bank – collection of traditional and indigenous varieties of apples and pears in the orchard
- established ecological nursery of indigenous and traditional tree varieties
- collection orchard equipped with info point arranged for blind and visually impaired (Braille inscriptions)
- helping owners of meadow orchards with equipment and expert advices
- workshops and practical demonstrations on upbringing fruit orchard, its maintenance, pruning standard-size trees and processing fruit
- workshops on pruning trees and processing fruit in order to get a certificate of competence for vocational training
- a mobile ram press and bottling facility available to locals
- planting standard-size trees around elementary schools
- planting fruit trees in Bistrica ob Sotli, Podsreda, Olimje and Gregovci
- a handbook *Traditional and indigenous species and varieties of standard-size fruit trees*
- Carjevič institute
- international fruit consultation – the role and importance of meadow orchards in the future
- regular monitoring of birds (1999 and 2010 ...)
- cooperation with professional services and associations, fruit societies
- integration of farms with meadow orchards into organic farming and agri-environmental measures
- Kozjansko Apple Festival – the biggest annual nature conservation event in Slovenia

IV. RESPECT OF THE CRITERIA OF THE ATTRIBUTION OF THE AWARD

13. Sustainable territorial development

Is the project part of a sustainable development policy?

Does it contribute to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural or aesthetic values of the landscape? How?

Has it successfully countered or posed a remedy to any pre-existing environmental damage or urban blight? How?

The project fully contributes to the environmental, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic value of the landscape.

Conservation and revitalization of meadow orchards follow the goals of the protected area and at the same time, to the long-term orientation of the Municipality of Kozje - this is the preservation of biotic and landscape diversity. In a broader sense, the project fully follows the goals of sustainable development.

The national project *Reviving Slovenia's Meadow Orchards and Fruit Gardens of Slovenia* started in 1999 in the Municipality of Kozje under the expert guidance of the Public Institution of Kozjansko Regional Park, the one that manages protected area.

Cooperation between the Municipality of Kozje and Public Institution of Kozjansko Regional Park is good and successful. In the Municipality of Kozje we are proud of the integrated project on the reviving meadow orchards, which has been carried out for 20 years by Kozjansko Regional Park with the support of the Municipality of Kozje.

Opinion of the Municipality of Kozje is that the project has significantly improved the quality of life for the residents living in this area. Moreover, it has improved the appearance of the landscape and has a favourable effect on the biodiversity of the area.

In the past, meadow orchard was indispensable part of the farms in Kozjansko. As such is inseparably connected to the diversity of the Kozjansko landscape. Exceptional landscape variety is the basis for an exceptional biotic diversity of the area. Kozjansko is a hot spot of biodiversity. The characteristic of Kozjansko landscape is diversity of agricultural use in connection with forest areas and fragmented land property.

The orchard appears as a garden and standard-size orchard in open landscape.

In the 80s and 90s of the 20th century, agriculture in Kozjansko began to intensify and modernize. The economic, social and demographic structure of farms began to change in the area.

Farmers began to cut out orchards in order to facilitate the cultivation with agricultural machinery. Certain part of the area was overgrown. Many standard-size trees were replaced with fruit trees on a weak foundation. In addition to the extensive farming method, they introduced intensive care of orchards. This had huge impact on the aesthetic appearance of the landscape and its diversity.

In the framework of implementation of the project *Reviving Slovenia's Meadow Orchards and Fruit Gardens of Slovenia*, the process of degradation of meadow orchards was stopped in time and fortunately, without any permanent consequences for biodiversity. Over the last 20 years, about 11,000 trees have been pruned, many orchards have been revitalized, the missing trees have been replanted and many orchards were newly planted.

In the period of Maria Theresa, she ordered to plant several tree avenues along the traffic routes. Recognized aesthetic and landscape value of fruit trees was the reason for planting four larger tree avenues.

The establishment of gene bank, nursery, implementation of courses and practical demonstrations, professional and technical support and promotion are activities carried out by the professional team of the Kozjansko Regional Park. Activities are guarantee for the future preservation of meadow orchards.

Pruning, revitalization, planting anew and tree avenues contribute to the environmental and aesthetic value of the landscape. At the same time, we preserve biodiversity as the meadow orchards represent extremely important habitat for many bird species that are protected with Natura 2000.

Various forms of fruit trees in the landscape, such as tree avenues, individual standard-size trees and orchards, raise aesthetic value of the landscape and in many places represent a backdrop for intensified agricultural land or inadequate architecture. The proportion between a standard-size fruit tree and a traditional house seems as a harmonious landscape scene. Today, residential houses from the seventies and eighties stand out in landscape image. Planting intensive fruit trees around these houses has even worse effect. This landscape image is effectively corrected by planting old traditional varieties of apple and pears.

Orchards with traditional varieties are in folk's memory and local people proudly identify themselves with the tradition of fruit growing and its customs. In Public Institution of Kozjansko Regional Park, years ago, local survey on the use of apples in the diet of the residents of the protected area was carried out. They found out some varieties unknown to profession, different names and purposes of the use for various varieties.

They discovered more than thirty different dishes with apples as an ingredient. Locals are familiar with the characteristics of different old varieties and they are preparing dishes accordingly to those characteristics. Even different small stories from people's lives in connection with old traditional varieties are written.

Renewed knowledge, customs, knowledge transfer and intergenerational cooperation are raising social and cultural value of local's life.

Meadow orchards, as an agricultural category, are mainly involved in agri-environment measures, as they are cultivated in an environmentally friendly way without pesticides and artificial fertilizers.

For few farms, the orchard represents an additional source of income or the fruit is the basis for complementary activity on the farm. Healthy fruit and fruit products (juices, dried fruit, fruit brandies and vinegar) are becoming more and more an economic value or an additional source of income on farms.

Annual event Kozjansko Apple Festival has been taking place every second weekend in October for 19 years. It is prove, that kozjansko apple has once again become an economic category. At the event, which is one of the largest nature conservation events in Slovenia, about 170 exhibitors present and trade their own products, produced and processed in an environmental-friendly manner.

Kozjansko Regional Park is giving environmentally friendly producers the *Sožitje* brand, which includes produce in Kozjanski Park.

Professional and technical support, educational and promotional events, identification of the locals with the tradition of growing fruit, quality cooperation established between the local community, the manager of the protected area Kozjanski Park), the local population and non-governmental organizations are guarantee that landscape of Kozjansko will be preserved and

will form the basis for exceptional biotic diversity areas.
The preserved aesthetic and environmental component of the area is a source for increasing the social, cultural and economic value of the area.
In Kozjanski park, apple is more than just a fruit – it is a symbol of preserved nature, traditional landscape, heritage, health and recognisability of Kozjansko.

14. Exemplary value

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?
Which are the good practices that it implemented?*

Meadow orchards represent one of the best environmental practices because of farming produce grown in a sustainable way. The project serves as an example of good practice, not only in Slovenia but also in a wider European area.

The project is connected by agriculture, nature conservation and landscaping. Sustainable farming improves the nature conservation and landscape features of the area. It also improves the quality of life of the locals and contributes to the preservation of the European and world cultural heritage.

Locals actively participated in the implementation of nature conservation measures to preserve the Natura 2000 area with those almost forgotten traditional methods of orchard processing. Fruit produced in a healthy, sustainable way protects endangered and rare bird species. With remarkable Kozjansko Apple Festival, kozjansko apple became a symbol, an icon that connects various professions and interests that lead to prosperity for all - nature and man. Kozjansko Apple Festival is a traditional event in Kozjanski Park, at the Podsreda market town, which takes place every second weekend in October since 1999. The event reflects joint efforts of residents and Kozjanski Park. Their most important task is preservation of nature and agricultural landscape of Kozjansko which typical distinctive landscape element are standard-size meadow orchards with old varieties of apple trees. Each year, Kozjansko apple attracts more and more visitors and stakeholders in protected area.

A collection orchard with 102 varieties of apple and 60 varieties of pear trees represents invaluable gene bank. Gene bank is the insurance that the traditional varieties will not disappear and at the same time provides the basis for further conservation of meadow orchards.

15. Public participation

Does the project actively encourage the public's participation in the decision-making process? How?

Is the project in line with the wider policies implemented by national, regional or local authorities?

On the initiative of Kozjanski park, a non-governmental organization Kozjanske jabke Association was founded in year 2000. It brings together farmers, locals and environmentalists. In the past years, Kozjanski Park has carried out several training workshops for fruit growers and fruit processing courses, which were mainly made for the residents of the protected area.

Every year, Kozjanski Park makes practical workshops on pruning trees. They are taking place in the owner's orchard and are excellent opportunity for exchanging different opinions, experiences and getting to know each other.

Kozjanski park, as a professional institution cooperates intensively with owners of orchards, because they represent source of information for an appropriate way of cultivating orchards with different varieties and their names. Each year, the commission chooses the owner of the most beautiful orchard.

The project also involves the public in the form of organizing and implementing professional management for various stakeholders (schoolchildren, professional associations and other interested public). Expert guides are carried out by the experts from Kozjanski Park at the location of the parent orchard at the Čerček farm near Podsreda, near the head office of Kozjanski Park.

On the topic of meadow orchards in connection with the preservation of biotic and landscape diversity, Kozjanski Park cooperated in the following projects:

national – *Reviving Slovenia's Meadow Orchards and Fruit Gardens*,

program Leader, LAS Posavje *Opportunities with traditional orchards in Posavje* and

two international ones: Interreg IIIA Slovenia-Croatia *Standard-tree Orchards as an Element of Preserving Biodiversity and Aesthetic Value of Landscape* and

operational program IPA Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013 – *From Wryneck to juice*.

The meadow orchard preservation project follows the objectives of the following documents:

Natura 2000 Management Programme (2015-2020)

Rural Development Programme (2014-2020)

Annual Management Plan of Kozjansko Regional Park

Development and strategic documents of the Municipality of Kozje.

16. Awareness-raising

Is the project effectively increasing public awareness of the importance of landscape in terms of human development, consolidation of European identity, or individual and collective well-being? How?

Public in Slovenia and parks that are included in The Parks Dinarides Network know this project. The project of revitalization of meadow orchards was presented at the conference of the Parks of the Dinaric Arc, in various protected areas in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austria and Germany, at various consultations of professional organizations and at various fairs across Slovenia and abroad.

Working together with various professional institutions (institutes, universities), various protected areas around Slovenia and Europe on the theme of traditional varieties, we learn about the common European history of meadow orchards and traditional varieties.

According to the good practice of preserving the meadow orchards, Kozjanski Park is well known throughout the Central European region and in the Balkans. Traditional varieties of apple trees connect the Central European landscape also in landscape and nature conservation sense.

Purpose of project to raise people's awareness about the importance of biodiversity was accomplished. That leads to diverse landscape structure and aesthetic component in landscaping of homesteads. Importance of food production is demonstrated by the strong demand for seedlings of traditional and indigenous varieties from ecological nursery of Kozjanski Park and increased demand for apples from extensive meadow orchards is increasing from year to year.

V. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Together with the printed version of the Application form, additional material in digital format should be included in one CD-Rom, DVD or USB key, and returned by post or courier to:

Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons

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- Text (20 pages max.): *PDF format*
- Photos (10 max.): *JPEG 350 dpi high definition*
- Posters (2 max.): *PDF format high definition or JPEG 350 dpi high definition*
- Video (15 min max.): *mpeg 2 format - It is recommended to present a video (even of amateur quality).*

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