

## Vas and Zala county's SWOT analysis

(Programme area of the operational programme for cross-border co-operation Slovenia-Hungary)

### Nature, environment, environmental infrastructure

#### Strengths

- Forest cover the territory of both counties above the national average.
- High proportion of nature protection areas (mainly in Vas County)
- Risk of water pollution of river Rába declined in previous years, the Zala river's water quality is improving a continuously.
- A significant amount of thermal and medicinal waters, local conditions allow to use geothermal energy in the near future
- Favorable conditions for using biomass energy
- The north and the east part of Vas county is a favorable location to establish wind turbines
- The whole programme area has favorable conditions to use solar energy
- There are no major water quality problems
- Development of flood-prevention and protection on the Mura river is in progress, on the river sides of the Gyöngyös, Répce and Rába these facilities have been established or investments are in progress
- The previous landfills have been closed and recultivated the modern landfills have been established.

#### Weaknesses

- The proportion of the used agricultural area has significantly decreased between 2000 and 2010.
- Air pollution is typically high along roads number 8, 76 and 86 (mainly in the cities), on the east bypass road at Szombathely, and at some major road junctions and in major city centres.
- Main causes of groundwater contamination still exist: insufficient infrastructure for rainwater diversion, usage of chemical fertilizers, communal waste water dehydration (in Vas county's 95, in Zala county's 90 se is not solved. Significant extent of vulnerable water bases and their protection areas
- Rainwater diversion's is not sufficient, causing danger of flooding or inland water problems. Along the rivers of the Kerka, Zala and the Principális in Nagykanizsa flood protection infrastructure needs further development
- Municipal solid waste collection and management is not selective, solid waste disposal is still the general solution.

- Selective waste collection and waste management has already begun.

- There are a lot of illegal landfills near to the settlement's border
- The quality of drinking water is good, but needs further investments to clean it from arsenium and iron in some areas
- The house building has slowed down from the 2000<sup>th</sup> year on. s

### Opportunities

- Rising environmental consciousness and preference of local products
- Technological and economic preconditions of producing renewable energy improve, most significantly in the case of geothermal, solar energy, wind and biomass energy. The proportion of these alternative energy resources must to increase within the programme area to increase the share of these alternative energy resources is a key opportunity to build upon.
- Further in infrastructure for flood protection and rainwater diversion
- For municipalities with below 2000 inhabitant equivalent waste water management has to be solved
- Scope of alternative energy resources are increasing against gas in energy supply.
- More efficient selective waste collection and waste management

### Threats

- Fossil energy prices increase in the near future, maintenance costs of real estates will also raise. This can motivate usage of alternative energy resources.
- Weather conditions are expected to become more and more extreme, with more frequent natural disasters (floods, flash-floods, forest fires, desiccation of soil), that is, rainwater diversion and the water retention will have a key role
- Lack of rainwater diversion can lead to problems in groundwater contamination and it can harm drinking water bases.
- Vas county's 95 and Zala county's 90 settlements that have no solution for waste water management, will face a hopeless situation

## Economy

### Strengths

### Weaknesses

- The processing industry's productivity is higher than the country's average
- Vas county is the one of the most industrialized county in Hungary
- The tourism is very significant in Vas county: there are some significant services in thermal and balneological tourism, valuable natural tourism, cultural heritage tourism. The tourism in Zala county is significant too: there is the Balaton lake, and the county has some thermal and balneological bath with strong services
- The cities have industrial parks, so that is good basis for production infrastructure
- The innovation presence in the enterprise sector
- The economic environment is very suitable for the machinery industrial, electrical industrial, and car industrial development
- In Zala county, the home capital proportion in corporations is higher than the country's average
- Intermediary organizations are working in the programme area, these can help the other organizations to develop innovation
- The employment centres and the adult education system is working well with each other
- In Vas county, the foreign capital proportion in corporations is higher than the country's average, so the county is more vulnerable to the globalization process
- The economic capacity eased in 2010, which is 16% lower, than the same index in 2000 (in purchasing power parity). Zala county's economy eased in 2010 too (this index in 2010 is just 5% higher than in 2000)
- The investments environment has been reduced
- The number of employees in agriculture dropped to 50% off that in 2000 (2000: 4796, 2010: 2395)
- Intermediary organizations' life is depending too much on project resources
- Low capacity and investment in R&D sector
- The Savaria University in Szombathely has small number of faculties, that serve directly the economic development
- In Zala County: low university capacity, weak cooperation between the universities and the corporations, there is not any strong university centre
- There are dispersed, often isolated developments instead of complex region developments
- Core infrastructure systems are scant or in bad state (roads, railways)

### Opportunities

- The programme area is excellent for quality food production
- Zala county has strong “green” tourism development potential
- The programme area has some thermal and balneological bath, so additional tourism development, and the tourism network development is necessary
- Logistical development potential in Letenye and Nagykanizsa area, because these municipalities are located next to the state border, so this location can be very competitive
- The car industrial corporations, and their supplier network is strong at the programme area
- Some industrial parks has free space, so these parks can develop in the near future
- Generate networks for more effective economic life
- In the programme area, when the universities, research centres and the corporation sphere increase cooperation with each other, that can be the way to an innovative and effective development
- Develop the core infrastructure systems (roads, railways)
- Croatia joining the European Union can be a perfect timing to increase the connections between our countries

### Threats

- Dispersed, unconcerted developments continue
- Laggard cooperation between the economic actors (universities, corporations, research centres)
- The programme area’s potential will be reducing, because of the small number of university faculties low quality of education
- The programme area will be in disadvantaged position, when the R&D investment remain as low as now
- When core infrastructure will not be developed, it will cause further negative processes for the whole economy

### Society, demography, education

#### **Strengths**

- Well established adult education system operates in the area,

#### **Weaknesses**

- The decrease of the population with a bit higher level than the national

cooperating well with the unemployment offices (In County there is REMEK Adult Training Centre)

- The skill training system is being modified to supply the students with more practical knowledge.
- Social institutes operating with full usage
- The number of the available places (742 places) in the nurseries have risen by 19% in 2010 compared to 2000, but the number of the places in the kindergartens are varying, remarkable decrease in the number of children and low level of usage in the area of Vasvár and Óriszentpéter
- Relatively developed human infrastructure (education, health care, social) in the county with the help of the governmental and European Union funds.
- Decreasing number of doctor patient meetings in County Zala since 2005
- The traditions of cooperations between the settlements.
- Cultural diversity, nationalities.
- The level of the activity of the civil society is higher than the national average. (higher number of non-profit organisation in the counties.)

average in the counties Vas and Zala especially in the Vasvár and Óriszentpéter areas as well as in the Letenye and Lenti areas (due to the demographic changes the area has started to age)

- Gradual decrease in the number of births.
- Decrease in the number of children of the ages between 0-18 years with a higher pace than the national average in the years of 2000s.
- The development of an aging society.
- Gradual emigration from the county (in county Zala: -0,6 per mille, in county Vas: -2,11 per mille)
- The high rate of the divorces refers to social instability.
- Sudden increase in the rate of unemployment especially in County Zala (in County Vas: 6,2%, in County Zala: 9,5%)
- Gradual decrease in the number of employed people
- More than the half of the unemployed people has been unemployed for more than 180 days.
- Decrease in the number of positions in the elementary schools.
- The medical status of the population compared to the national average is unfavourable. The number of some illnesses such as heart problems and illnesses of the cardiovascular system, diabetes, cancer have increased (It can even double since 2000.)
- The rate of the people working in Austria is high.
- The intelligence living in the area is leaving the region (abroad or to

the capital)

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The increase of the health consciousness, which gives possibility to the expansion of the scope of the medical services regarding not only the elderly people.</li> <li>- Better cooperation between the education and the markets to supply the markets with skilled work force (from qualitative and quantitative point of view, the harmony of the demand and the offer).</li> <li>- To build on the civil sphere and the civil organisations.</li> <li>- Networking developments in the training systems.</li> <li>- To improve the social systems (health sector, elderly care) with investments built on more funds, so that real improvements would be realised not only statistic, to create better feeling of the people.</li> <li>- Measures aiming at making the settlement of the companies easier, thus increasing the number of workplaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The closing down of the enterprises is continuous due to the economic crises, increasing the rate of the unemployment in the area (see in Zalaegerszeg the Flextronics company, which after the several cutbacks, redundancies, some more 1100 people will lose their jobs, which can deteriorate the data of the unemployment in the region)</li> <li>- The disadvantaged, underprivileged areas will suffer from depopulation due to the emigration and natural decrease.</li> <li>- The medical status of the area can go on deteriorating, the rate of the mortality can increase, endemics can appear, and the feeling of the people can become worse.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Traffic, availability</u></b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The highway No. M7 has increased the reachability of the county Zala from Budapestről as well as from the southern markets.</li> <li>- One of the three international airports is situated in county Zala (Sármellék).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heavy traffic on the road No. 86 regarding cars and the long vehicles, trucks. The truck load has doubled since the 2000s).</li> <li>- Increasing traffic, the quality of the main road system is increasing slowly.</li> </ul>

- Continuous development of the railway lines (the development of the Sopron- Szombathely- Szentgotthárd lines), there is a possibility of the foundation of a logistic centre in the area of Szombathely.
- It is easy to get to the towns around Szombathely on public roads.
- The establishment of multimodal junctions, interchanges (Körmend)
- Remarkable positional facilities. ( North-west directions, borders to three countries)
- The capital of the county Zala (Zalaegerszeg) does not have any connections to the highways.
- Both the public road and the rail road connection are in bad conditions between the two centre cities of the counties, and it limits the possibilities of the creation of a uniform labour market.
- The multimodal junctions, interchanges have only appeared in a few places.
- The public transport facilities are not competitive with the personal transport.
- The public transport of the small settlements does not help the people going to work.
- The weakness of the southern connections limits the relationship with Croatia, and the northern relations of Nagykanizsa.
- The operation of the airport in Sármellék is not assured economically.
- There are no highways or motorways in county Vas.

### Opportunities

- The possibilities of the realisation of the road No. 65 Central-European Traffic Channel, which would serve as the north-south traffic axle.
- Change of the roads No. 8 and 86 to motorways, the decrease of the truck load.
- The regionalisation and the merger of the Volán companies, and the

### Threats

- The development and the renewal of the roads No. 4 and 5 will not be financed by the EU, which leads to the worse availability of the small settlements, thus the regarded settlements stagnation, procrastination can be diagnosed.
- The north - south connection will not be realised.
- The increase in the already overloaded roads (road No. 86) leads to

better cooperation of the different ways of transport (public road, railway companies), the creation of an more effective public transport (multimodal junctions, interchanges, synchronised timetables).

- The development of the lower level roads with the aim of the better availability of the region.
- The development of the roads crossing the border with the aim of the better availability of the region.
- The development of the logistic centre roles (Szombathely, Nagykanizsa)
- Further rail road developments, investments (construction of double rails, electric lines)

the roads much faster amortisation.

- In County Vas there will not be any highways, which would decrease the level of availability of the region.

### Settlement system

#### Strengths

- The regional centre, Szombathely is significant in county Vas, its connection network is strong with the neighbouring cities.
- The traditions and the successes of the cooperation among the settlements.
- The traditions of the cooperation among the settlements at the borders.
- Traditional settlement types, regional identity.
- Governmental aid to the settlements with debts.

#### Weaknesses

- Network of small settlements, the small settlements have supply problems.
- Towns with lack of function (settlements that only have the title of a town)
- Distance from the centres of the region, relative low innovative potential of the centre cities.
- The areas on the other side of the border are also underdeveloped, and lack a centre.

- The micro-villages are badly supplied with the public services; they can hardly keep the population from emigrating.

### Opportunities

- Building on the connections that have already been established.
- Creation of mutual regional developments with the help of the more effective dialogue, information changes between the settlements.
- Cooperation across the borders with the aim of a more successful region.

### Threats

- The micro villages lose their population.
- The settlements are having more and more debts.

