

The Governance of Land Use

COUNTRY FACT SHEET SLOVENIA

The planning system

Levels of government and their responsibilities

Slovenia is a unitary country with 2 levels of government; the national level and 212 municipalities. As in most unitary countries, the national government adopts the framework legislation that structures the spatial planning system. It conducts most land-use related work through the *Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning*, which is responsible for the preparation of national level spatial plans, for environmental impact assessments, for the designation of nature conservation areas, for land surveys and for the provision of land and cadastre data. In addition to the *Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning*, other ministries may also propose the preparation of *National Spatial Plans* if necessary. Furthermore, the national government influences land use through its responsibility for national roads, railways and other structures of national importance, for agriculture and for heritage protection. Through an administrative agency, the national government is also responsible for issuing building permits.

No regional level of government exists in Slovenia, but *Regional Development Agencies* exist to support economic development at the subnational level. These agencies may also initiate the preparation of inter-municipal *Regional Spatial Plans* although local communities should mainly initiate their preparation (see below).

Municipalities have the right to manage the spatial development in their jurisdiction except for those aspects that are under the direct control of the national government. They adopt municipal land-use plans in accordance with national guidelines that aim at creating rational, mixed and sustainable land-use patterns. Municipalities are allowed to form inter-municipal associations to prepare their *Regional Spatial Plans*, but this is rare in practice.

Spatial and land-use plans

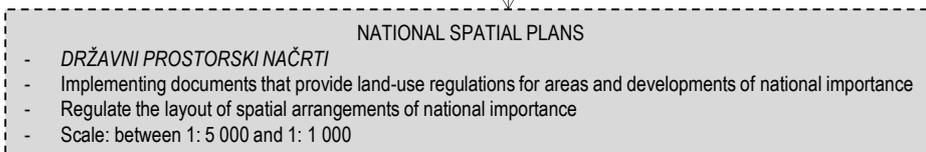
Slovenia operates a hierarchical system of plans. The highest level planning document is the *Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia*, which outlines the main objectives for spatial development. It focuses on the description and development of spatial systems of national importance and considers settlements, transport, infrastructure, and environmental and landscape protection. The current *Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia* was approved in 2004. As of the time of writing, it is under revision.

The national government can also adopt *National Spatial Plans*, which are spatial arrangements plans for development projects of national importance. These plans are prepared at scales between 1: 5 000 and 1: 1 000 and can override existing municipal land-use plans, but must follow the *Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia*. They contain detailed outlines of permitted uses, built structures and parcellation. Their primary use is to ensure fast and uncomplicated planning for the construction and modernisation of infrastructure and other structures at national, regional and sometimes local level. Furthermore, they can also be used in other settings, such as for reconstruction after natural disasters (in which case they may exceptionally contradict the *Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia*).

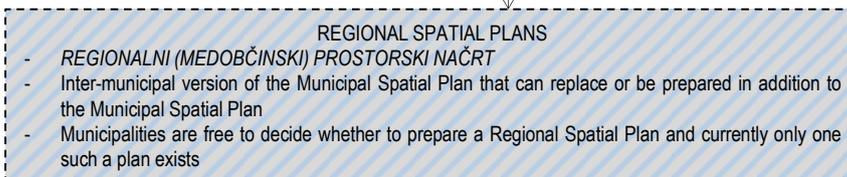
Organisation of spatial and land-use planning in Slovenia

General framework

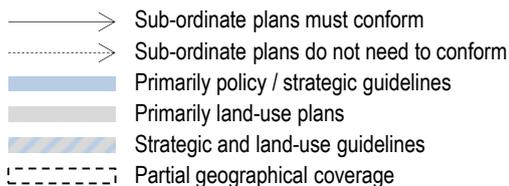
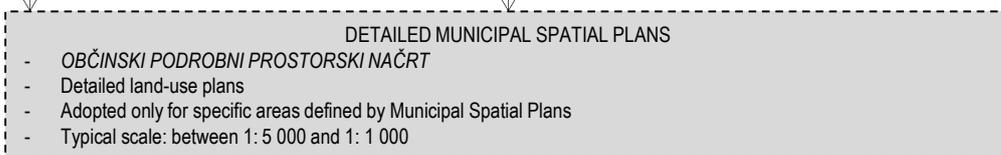
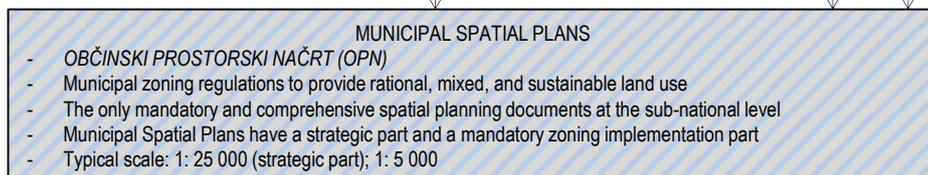
National



Inter-municipal



Municipal



Note:
As of the time of writing, reforms of the spatial planning system are under discussion, but no decision regarding their scope and content has been made.

At the municipal level, the main planning document is the *Municipal Spatial Plan*. It is divided into two parts: a strategic part and an operational part. The strategic part contains objectives for the spatial development of a municipality, guidelines on the development of the built environment and a concept for commercial development of municipal importance. The operational part contains land-use plans (typically at a scale of 1: 5 000) and associated zoning regulations covering the entire municipality. It also specifies for which areas a *Detailed Municipal Spatial Plan* is required. Municipalities are obliged by the *Spatial Planning Act* of 2007 to prepare the operational part of a *Municipal Spatial Plan*. However, due to the lengthy planning process many municipalities had not prepared such a plan by 2015. In municipalities that do not yet have approved a *Municipal Spatial Plan*, the spatial planning documents are based on older legislation from 1984.

Regional Spatial Plans are comparable to *Municipal Spatial Plans* except that they are prepared jointly for several municipalities and adopted by inter-municipal associations. The co-operating municipalities agree on preparing a joint plan and specify who is responsible for drafting it. If it contains sufficient detail, a *Regional Spatial Plan* may be prepared instead of *Municipal Spatial Plans*. Municipalities are free to decide whether to prepare a *Regional Spatial Plan* and as of early 2016, only one such plan had been adopted.

Detailed Municipal Spatial Plans are only prepared for specific areas. They contain detailed land-use regulations and specify permitted uses. They are typically drawn at a scale of 1: 1 000 or 1: 500.

Major laws and regulations

The *Spatial Planning Act* of 2007 contains the framework legislation that regulates the spatial planning system of Slovenia. It also contains regulations regarding the provision of infrastructure for new developments and establishes a spatial information system. Other important acts include the *Environmental Protection Act*, which concerns nature conservation areas and the *Water Act*, which protects aquifers and contains provisions to prevent erosion. The *Agricultural Act* contains classifications of agricultural land that can protect it permanently from development. Furthermore, the *Forest Act*, the *Land Survey Service Act*, the *Cultural Heritage Protection Act* and the *Public Roads Act* have major influences on land use.

Co-ordination mechanisms

On a general level, the *Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia* is the main policy document to co-ordinate policies across sectors. With respect to the preparation of individual spatial plans, a special consultation process exists for ministries and companies with statutory competencies. During the drafting phase of a plan, they are obliged to state the requirements that it would entail for their sector. At the end of the drafting process, they need to approve the solutions that have been found. At the local level, municipalities have the task of co-ordinating between all stakeholders. Furthermore, municipalities may work with specific ministries on the particular aspects of land-use patterns and environmental regimes.

Expropriations

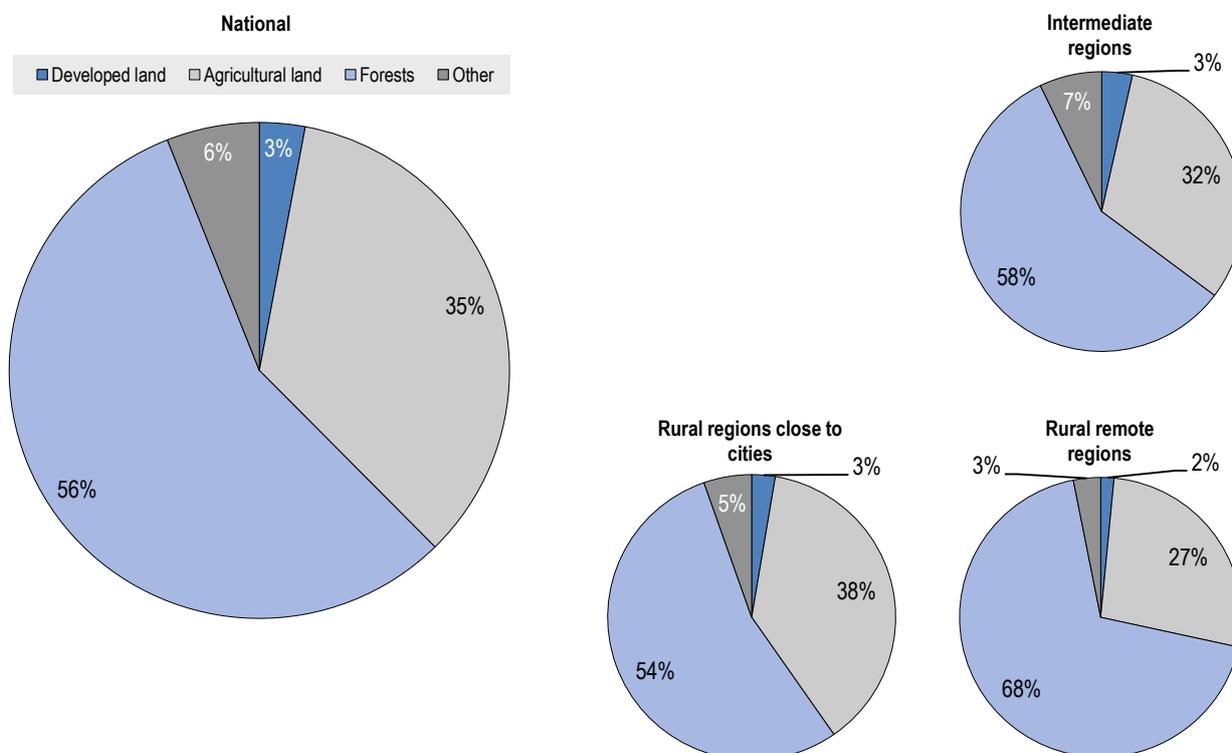
According to the Slovene Constitution, any real property ownership can be revoked or limited if it is in the public interest. The *Spatial Planning Act* lists four particular cases; infrastructure development; public safety and defence; land required for the provision of education, health care or social protection; and the construction of social housing. Other legislation also specifies that land can be expropriated for mining, for nature protection and for cultural heritage protection. In most cases, land is not expropriated but transferred amicably.

Recent and planned reforms to the system of land-use planning

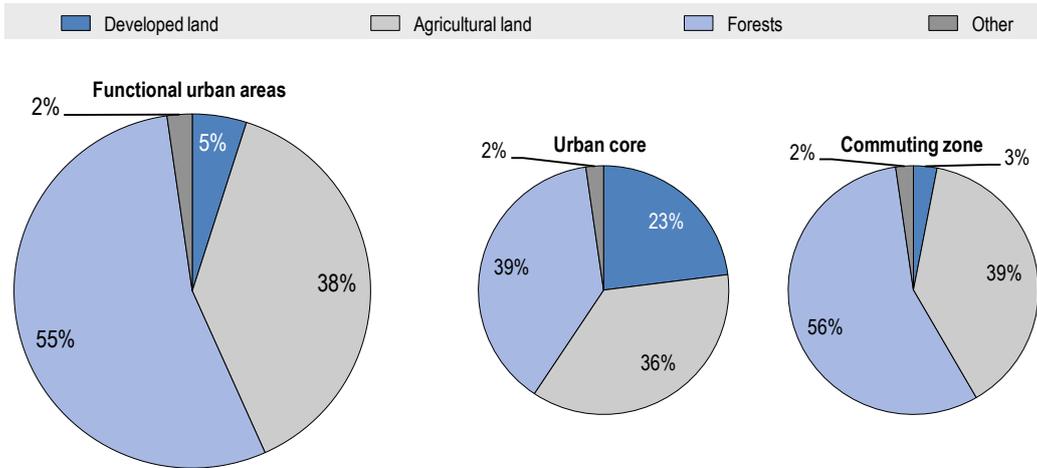
The first decade after Slovenian independence in 1991 was characterised by a series of temporary reforms to the spatial planning system. The current system was established with the adoption of the *Spatial Management Act* in 2002 and its replacement by the *Spatial Planning Act* in 2007. Among other reforms, the *Spatial Planning Act* changed the hierarchical structure of spatial plans and the process through which *Regional Spatial Plans* are prepared. Since 2007, two minor reforms to the act have occurred and in 2010, the section relating to *National Spatial Plans* was substituted by a separate act concerning the topic. As of the time of writing, a major reform of spatial planning acts and of the building code was on-going, with the objective of adopting the legislation in early 2017.

Land cover in Slovenia

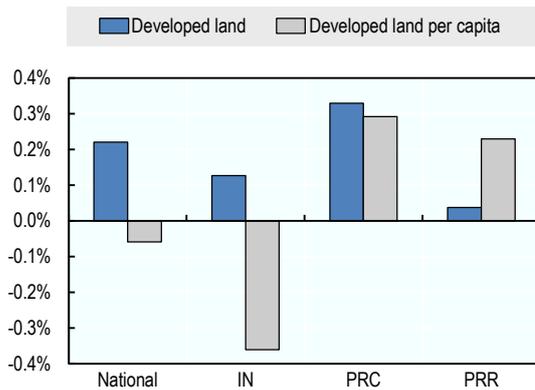
Land cover at the national level



Land cover in functional urban areas (FUAs)

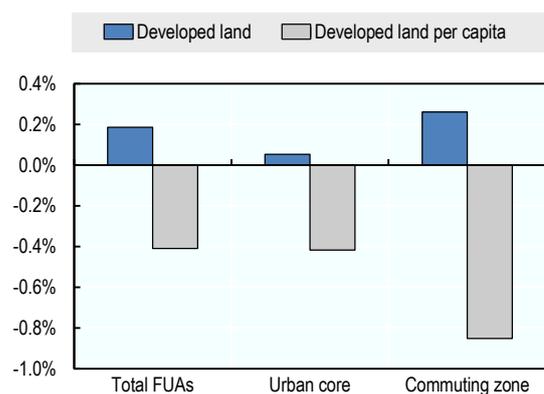


Annual change in developed land, 2000-12



Note: IN: Intermediate regions, PRC: Rural regions close to cities, PRR: Rural remote regions.

Annual change in developed land in functional urban areas from 2000 to 2012



Note: Values for urban cores and commuting zones refer only to FUAs with more than 500 000 inhabitants.

Land-use trends in Slovenia

With a surface area of approximately 20 000 square kilometres, Slovenia is one of the smallest OECD countries. With just 290 square metres of developed land per capita, it also has one of the lowest per capita land consumption of all analysed countries. Furthermore, growth in developed land has remained low and roughly in line with population growth, thus indicating a continued pattern of compact development. Compared to other central European countries, it has a relatively low share of agricultural land, but a high share of forested land.

Source: OECD calculations based on Corine Land Cover dataset.

Land cover at the national level in Slovenia

| Land cover (km ²) | National | Urban regions | Intermediate regions | Rural regions close to cities | Rural remote regions |
|---|----------|---------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Total area | 20 249 | | 8 383 | 10 829 | 1 037 |
| Total developed land | 596 | | 295 | 286 | 16 |
| Percentage of total | 2.9% | | 3.5% | 2.6% | 1.5% |
| Annual change in developed land, 2000-12 | 1.3 | | 0.4 | 0.9 | 0.01 |
| Annual percentage change in developed land, 2000-12 | 0.22% | | 0.13% | 0.33% | 0.04% |
| Agricultural land | 7 019 | | 2 659 | 4 081 | 279 |
| Percentage of total | 34.7% | | 31.7% | 37.7% | 26.9% |
| Annual change in agricultural land, 2000-12 | -0.5 | | -0.1 | -0.3 | -0.01 |
| Annual percentage change in agricultural land, 2000-12 | -0.01% | | -0.01% | -0.01% | -0.002% |
| Forests | 11 420 | | 4 829 | 5 880 | 710 |
| Percentage of total | 56.4% | | 57.6% | 54.3% | 68.5% |
| Annual change in forests, 2000-12 | -2.3 | | -0.8 | -1.5 | -0.004 |
| Annual percentage change in forests, 2000-12 | -0.02% | | -0.02% | -0.03% | -0.001% |
| Land cover per capita (m²) | | | | | |
| Total developed land per capita | 290 | | 255 | 345 | 217 |
| Annual percentage change in developed land per capita, 2000-12 | -0.06% | | -0.36% | 0.29% | 0.23% |
| Agricultural land per capita | 3 415 | | 2 300 | 4 935 | 3 855 |
| Annual percentage change in agricultural land per capita, 2000-12 | -0.29% | | -0.49% | -0.04% | 0.19% |
| Forests per capita | 5 556 | | 4 177 | 7 111 | 9 810 |
| Annual percentage change in forests per capita, 2000-12 | -0.30% | | -0.50% | -0.06% | 0.19% |

Land cover in functional urban areas (FUAs)

| Land cover in FUAs (km ²) | FUAs | Urban core | Commuting zone |
|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Total area | 4 478 | 423 | 4 056 |
| Total developed land | 220 | 97 | 123 |
| Percentage of total | 4.9% | 23.0% | 3.0% |
| Annual change in developed land, 2000-12 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| Annual percentage change in developed land, 2000-12 | 0.19% | 0.07% | 0.28% |
| Agricultural land | 1 719 | 154 | 1 565 |
| Percentage of total | 38.4% | 36.3% | 38.6% |
| Annual change in agricultural land, 2000-12 | -0.1 | -0.03 | -0.1 |
| Annual percentage change in agricultural land, 2000-12 | -0.01% | -0.02% | -0.01% |
| Forests | 2 437 | 162 | 2 275 |
| Percentage of total | 54.4% | 38.4% | 56.1% |
| Annual change in forests, 2000-12 | -0.6 | -0.03 | -0.5 |
| Annual percentage change in forests, 2000-12 | -0.02% | -0.02% | -0.02% |
| Land cover per capita in FUAs (m²) | | | |
| | FUAs (50 000+ inhabitants) | Urban core (only FUAs 500 000+) | Commuting zone (only FUAs 500 000+) |
| Total developed land per capita | 271 | 245 | 278 |
| Annual percentage change in developed land per capita, 2000-12 | -0.41% | -0.42% | -0.85% |
| Agricultural land per capita | 2 111 | 315 | 3 111 |
| Annual percentage change in agricultural land per capita, 2000-12 | -0.60% | -0.49% | -1.11% |
| Forests per capita | 2 994 | 404 | 5 979 |
| Annual percentage change in forests per capita, 2000-12 | -0.62% | -0.49% | -1.13% |

Source: All land cover statistics for Slovenia are based on OECD calculations based on *Corine Land Cover dataset*.