KIN'S DOMAINS INTERNATIONAL

International Ringing Cedars Association
http://www.kin-dom.org

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1. General overview



Eco-villages are springing up all around the world as a response to the modern lifestyle. They offer a practical solution to many problems of our time. Humanity is facing the peak of resource growth, while our lives lack meaningful content. Scientist are discovering we need to go towards sustainability in order to survive as a species. UN has published a report; *Global Environment Outlook 2000*. It is based on the accounts of the UN agencies. 850 individuals and more than 30 environmental institutes came to the conclusion that the present direction of development is unsustainable and delaying with measures is intolerable.

Eco-villages support a lifestyle that can easily be maintained in future. Life in eco-villages is organized in such a way that it allows successful and long-term self-sustainability for many generations. It also minimizes the environmental footprint of the individual. They are models of sustainability and a practical example of taking immediate measures. They are effectively opposing the degradation of social, ecological, and spiritual milieus. The increasing desire of many individuals and groups to live sustainably is a clear sign that people need to be given the possibility of living in eco-villages. Forming such villages should be undertaken in the spirit of research, and in support of the development of families that wish to secure the quality of life on Earth for generations to come, by living close to nature.

All eco-villages and its inhabitants bring many benefits to the area. They fill the vacuum in the abandoned villages, they manage the cultural landscapes, they improve demographic situations in the region, they add new contents/offers (tourism, agriculture, crafts, services etc.). The residents of eco-villages are environmentally aware, educated and creative people.

Kin's domain settlements are a new step in eco-village development. They share some elements with general eco-villages: eco-building, recycling and reduction of waste materials, organic food production, use of renewable energy sources, alternative social and economic models and artistic expressions, etc. Kin's domain settlement is a type of eco-village that ensures upbringing of future generations of families in safe, healthy social and natural environment. They preserve natural heritage, taking into account cultural tradition and the knowledge of our ancestors for many ages.

Each family in the Kin's Domain settlement has 1 to 1.5 hectares of land that encompasses housing, areas for the production of diverse food, domestic crafts, and spiritual fulfillment. On this small area self-sufficiency of the family is ensured. On the domain the family produces food and also a variety of products and raw materials (fuel, wood, fibers, natural fertilizers), herbs and handicrafts. Being in touch with the Earth and establishing a circulation of goods, energy and information between families in the settlement creates favorable conditions for the physical and mental well-being of the residents.

The major part of the settlement is covered by perennials: forest and fruit trees and bushes. Rich native species are planted on the principles of enhancing the natural ecosystem. Hundreds of plant species are linked by the principles of permaculture to facilitate co-existence of plants. Recycling of natural materials provides the plants with nutrients and increases the quality and quantity of the crop.

The Regulations in the settlement set out the maximum size of building grounds on each plot. They set the infrastructure specifics (roads, paths, common public areas, electricity and utility) in a rational way. The aim is a complete utilization of renewable sources of energy (biomass, solar, and wind energy). Houses match with the overall image of the settlement and are constructed from natural materials. Food is produced effectively using permaculture principles, without using expensive chemicals, fertilizers, or extensive mechanization.

People who live in Kin's Domain settlements support healthy lifestyles and organic food production. Common land is managed and owned by the organization of settlers of one or more settlements – Fund or Association. It buys, leases or acquires in other legal ways 40 to 300 hectares of land and makes a plan for the allocation of plots in agreement with competent authorities, and the parcels are

sold to individual owners at tariffs set by the Regulations. Plots of land are sold to the individual owners based on tariffs set in the Regulation.

In case of larger settlements comprised of fifty or more families, the Fund manages several common areas, buildings, and a kin school, which is also open to children from outside the village.

Small dispersed plots of land are generally considered to be a structural obstacle for agricultural development. In case of Kin's Domain settlement, however, such a structure is very conducive. It increases biodiversity, variegation of natural habitats and particularities, which are important factors in preserving the environment. The authorities should first encourage populating the farmlands unsuitable for large-scale farming with families, interested in forming Kin's Domain settlements.

Benefits of Kin's Domain settlements from three viewpoints of sustainable development:

Economical:

- improvement of the level of self-employment and self-sufficiency
- self-supply minimizes life expenses
- income from the surplus produce assures financial security
- decrease in the need for imported food, goods and energy (from abroad)
- alternative ways of food production assure high yields of variegated crops and provide protection against natural disasters
- high quality of living conditions ensures stable health and decreases medical expenses
- improvement of economic conditions in the countryside
- stabilization of a wider zone in a dynamic global market

Ecological:

- pure lifestyle means spontaneous protection of fresh air, clean water, nutrient rich soil, and the trees and plants that provide them
- well thought out stimulation of reciprocal assistance among plants and animals strengthens the natural eco-system
- without intense agriculture there is no source of depletion and burdening of the soil
- sustainable lifestyle maintains natural resources and biodiversity
- people restore the cultural landscape and cultivate traditional/native species of plants
- annual addition of biomass increases drastically
- independence from fossil fuel stabilizes the local market
- the use of renewable sources of energy and the decrease in need for transport lighten the harmful impacts of consumption on the environment
- all residences are built ecologically from the local materials, in harmony with the natural surroundings

Social:

- self-sufficiency, self-employment and lively local community increase social security
- a natural, healthy, and socially rich environment positively influences healthy upbringing of children
- gatherings, lectures, workshops and cultural events increase the quality of life of the village inhabitants and the surrounding area
- the potencial for recreation and tourism enhances
- there is an increase in percentage of highly educated individuals in the rural areas, leading to heterogenous demographic, cultural creative life in the municipality
- settlement is a graphic example of how to meld modern inventions with preservation of nature
- local cultural heritage and tradition are kept alive in kin's communities
- the level of education in the local community improves and spreads further to the wider public
- once a group of people starts to get closer to nature, it spreads the practical awareness of connectedness to nature and the need to respect the environment

2. Goals

2.1 Low ecological impact of all activities

If everybody on Earth lived by the same standard as European or American citizens do, we would need five planets for the entire population. The development of Kin's Domain settlements is based on the principle of low environmental impact, or low impact development, thus ensuring sustainable lifestyle, based on only those renewable resources that are actually available to us – just one planet Earth. Only natural materials are used, mostly acquired locally with the minimum of energy. Walking, cycling, and public transport are the main means of transportation. On the estates all the sources of energy are renewable, so there is no need for dependence on public electricity, gas and water supply network, or other such infrastructure. All waste materials merge back to the cycle of biomass on the property.

2.2 Improvement of natural richness and biodversity

The settlement will keep in its structure the primal matrix of the landscape and the living species that dwell there. The inhabitants will add a variety of old and new cultures, wisely planted to support each other, hinder the development of pests, enrich the soil, and increase the cumulative biomass on the property. When planning and building the settlement in the spirit of co-existence with the land, great care will be taken to make the interventions in natural habitats minimal, and to minimize ecological damage as well. Great care will be taken to preserve all the important types of habitats in the area of the settlement and in the surrounding area (marshes, old orchards, dry meadows, virgin forests etc.). In time individual ecosystems will increase the biodiversity of the entire area.

2.3 Integration of settlements into the local community and aiding the local economy

Planning the Kin's Domain settlement is a public thing. It unfolds in the agreement with the local resident population for the common interest of all. The nature of Kin's Domain settlements is such, it holistically cares for ecological, social, cultural and economical issues of the community. It supports sustainable development of the region. Such are the newest development guidelines of all the countries in the EU and the world, therefore Kin's Domain settlements are eligible for support by government institutions, municipalities, international foundations etc.

What follows is how communities benefit from Kin's Domain settlements:

- Improvement of local economic activity. According to the ethics of small ecological impact the inhabitants of the Kin's Domain settlements get their provisions in nearby shops and use local services.
- Colorful social happenings. Courses, workshops, lectures, cultural events etc. will animate the local community.
- The prices of land in the vicinity of the settlement will rise.
- Free passage, or transition is encouraged. Some of the main footpaths, leading between the Kin's Domains in the settlements, will be open for public as pathways for hiking.
- Wide selection of goods and services. The settlement will enrich the local economy with various high quality crafts, services and products. The basis of these is complementary cooperation and not competition with the already existing businesses in the nearby villages and towns.
- Financial flux to the local community from the government funds, intended to support environmental and social projects, will improve financial situation in generally neglected rural areas.

2.4 High degree of self-employment in Kin's Domain settlements

The purpose of a Kin's Domain is to satisfy all human needs and to assure that the family has the best possible natural lifestyle. A high quality of living is closely combined with the home business. The optimal solution is self-employment within the framework of the settlement. Local employment reduces the

ecological footprint on the environment and infrastructure (due to daily migrations to the office and back). Another advantage of such a community is that not everyone needs employment in the broader economy. It is sufficient to have a few individuals outside and they can spread the financial flux into the micro-market within the settlement, consisting predominantly of bartering. (More in paragraph 4.5 *employment in Kin's Domain settlements.*)

2.5 Settlements are open to visitors, major focus is on education

Due to the innovative nature of the project settlements will draw visitors from near and far. They will mostly be people interested in sustainable development, nature, and living a healthy lifestyle.

Kin's Domain settlements are a sound model of ecologically sustainable living. At workshops and gatherings there is exchange of knowledge, the learning of practical skills, quality meals are provided for everybody, it is possible to buy home grown crops and products, and traditional crafts are promoted and preserved. The visitors can directly experience the pulse of everyday life in the settlement.

2.6 Kin's Domain settlements projects will be open to reasearch

As the first Kin's Domain settlements will be pilot projects, The International Ringing Cedars Association will keep track of all the measurable indications of positive impact of the settlements on the environment and the society. Independent researchers will be invited to cooperate. The reasearch will include the ecological, economic, agricultural, medical, demographic and social parameters of the settlement's ecological footprint; of the influence on the biodiversity of the landscape, on the local economy, on the state of the individuals' health, on the stability of the families and the environment, as well as on the climate changes etc.

2.7 The development of Kin's Domain settlements takes into consideration cultural heritage



When building the houses and cultivating the land the elements of cultural heritage will be considered in harmony with modern permacultural discoveries about co-existence with nature. Customs will be revived that integrate the individual in the community, and strengthen a healthy patriotism in connection with the natural environment.

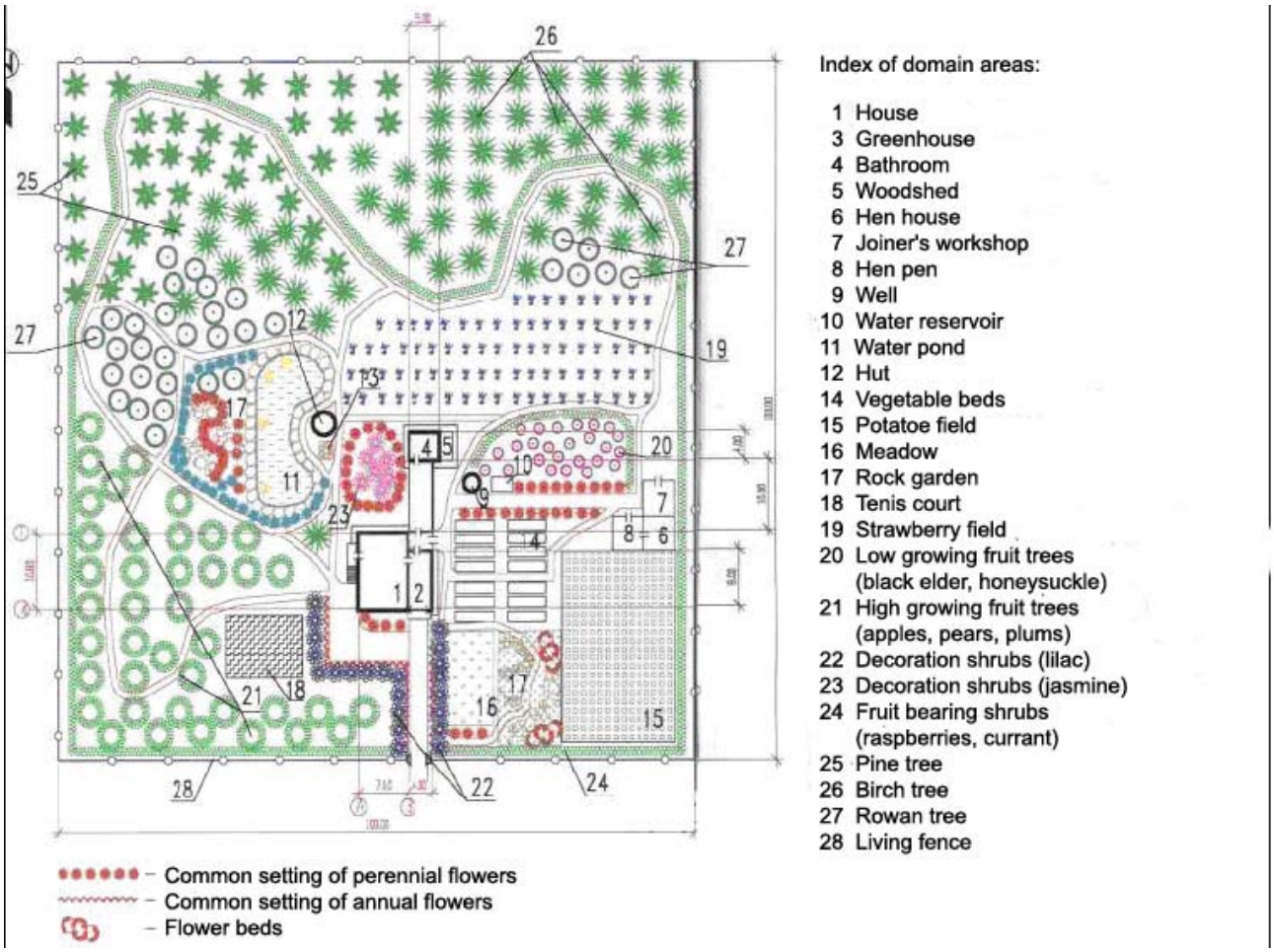
3. Kin's Domain

3.1 Outline of a Kin's Domain

Each family in the settlement is given at least 1 ha of land, which provides for residence, farming area for diverse crop production, natural raw materials for home crafts, perfect melieu for psycho-phisical recreation. 1 ha of land is large enough to allow the planting of diverse plant species and habitats (forrest, orchard, meadow, garden, water habitats etc.) to form a concluded circle of flow of energy and matter, yet at the same time small enough to allow for good results with a low level of phisical work and/or use of mechanization.

The largest area on the domain is occupied by the woods. Woods are not only "wood factory" but also a shelter for animals and people. Areas covered with woods are superior to all other areas in biomass production per hectare and the various services they provide are difficult to assess monetarily: the conservation of nutritive substances, recycling of organic matter, climate regulation, soil stabilization, prevention of erosion, ensuring the movement of rain from the coastal areas inland, regulating the levels of underground water, invigorating the hydrological system of the region, providing recreational areas.

By the calculations of Robert Constanza (article in *Nature magazine*, may 1997) the value of services of all eco-systems on Earth was 33 trillion dollars. The value of all services and goods on Earth in that year



was 43 trillion dollars. The value of the services by forests was 4.7 trillion dollars, which is 969 dollars per hectare. Compare this to a hectare of land covered with corn, estimated at approximately 800 dollars per hectare. The services of forests are so valuable that one standing tree is worth more than six fallen. Various bushes, edible berries, mushrooms and herbs give additional value to the forest and are a source of many goods. Well managed wood forest provide many raw-materials, such as lumber, kindling, resin, sap, nuts, bark, pigments, oils, remedies etc.

Diversity of organisms and micro-habitats are the foundation of stability. In such circumstances "pests" cannot spread excessively and the domain cannot be devastated by a drastic drop in yield of one crop (due to natural catastrophies, for example), since the domain farming is inherently policultural. Plant diversity guarantees availability of fresh fruits and vegetables practically all year round.

	Conventional farming	Kin's domain
Purpose of production:	for sales and profit	connection with the soil, self-sufficeincy, inner fulfilment, recreation, surplus is sold
Main emphasis:	quantity – quality	quality – quantity
Work force:	employees, family	family, neighbours, community
Mechanization:	high	very low or absent
Use of chemicals:	high	absent
Size of the estate:	from 10 ha to 100 ha and more	1-3 ha
Crops:	monocultures of cereals, vegetables, fruits (cattle, chicken)	policultures of fruits, nuts, berries, potatoes, vegetables, herbs, raw material crops (flax, sunflower, nettle, hemp), wood, cereals
Main emphasis:	annuals	perennials
Integration of human habitats with the farming areas:	low	high

On a smaller plot of land personal contact with the natural environment can be established. Human beings are the conscious force on the estate that regulates relationships among all other beings.

The boundary of a Kin's Domain is a living fence consisting of trees, bushes and shrubs. It ensures protection from wind, gives shelter to wild animals and serves as a natural demarcation of the personal realm of the family. One-quarter to three-quarters of the area of the Kin's Domain is covered with perennials: woods, orchards and shrubbery. Food is produced on practically the same principles as in permaculture—without the use of chemical agents such as pesticides, herbicides, artificial fertilizers and heavy mechanization.

Kin's Domain's self-suficiency doesn't cover only the needs for nourishment and shelter, but also the sustainable treatment of all waste. The circlulation of bio-mass is rounded up, so that wastes of some species become food for other species. In the end there is no rubbish. The goal is accomplished partially by composting all bio-degradable waste materials, by mindful usage of water, by avoiding plastic packaging and by using exclusively clothes made from natural materials—after such clothes wear out they can be used for various purposes in the household (reused as rags, carpets, bands etc.) and later composted. All organic matter coming from outside is redirected to the natural circulation of bio-mass on the land. Less bio-degradable materials can be used as building materials, all others are appropriately recycled. The positive influence on the market consists of increased demand for organic products in natural packaging from bio-degradable materials or from materials that can easily be returned to the production schemes.

3.2 House

Houses on Kin's Domains are built from natural materials that don't burden the environment or people's health. Such houses are built with regard to elements of architectural heritage of the region, and on the principle of "low impact housing", using renewable sources of energy (biomass, solar energy, etc.) Low-energy building from locally obtained materials (wood, stone, clay, straw etc.) is economical and ecological. The maximum size of houses is standardized by the Regulations. Houses are placed in the surroundings in the most optimal way, both infrastructuraly and visually.

The main elements of houses are:
- local natural materials, acquired and transported with low use of energy
- quality natural insulation (low-energy house, p. e. using straw)
- renewable resources (sun, wind, biomass) for heating, warm water and electricity
- efficient energy usage (of lights, devices etc.)
- economical usage of water (rainwater, gray water, compost toilet, plant water filtering systems)
- mindful treatment of waste (diminishing input, reusing, recycling, composting)
- using only bio-degradable chemicals (detergents, paints etc.)



3.3 Basic principles of land cultivation

3.3.1 Permaculture

30 years ago Australians David Holmgren and Bill Mollison coined the term "Permaculture" or permanent (sustainable) agriculture. Since the publication of the book *Permaculture I,* thousands of people worldwide began acting or thinking on the principles of permaculture. "**Perma**nent agri**culture**" didn't remain in the framework of farming, since no system of land cultivation can be sustainable without the support of stable cultural society.

Permaculture calls for shift of human attention from objects—which is cultural heritage of the Western civilization—to relationships. Stress is given to the intuitive right brain, characterized by the female half of humanity; thus the current masculine worldview of the civilization is being balanced and made holistic.

Permaculture is a also system of cultivating the landscape using ecology. It teaches us to build dwelling places—houses, villages, towns and whole regions—with the optimal usage of natural resources, local food production and waste recycling.
Core principles of permaculture are:
• people actively participate in all events within the natural environment
• their role is to collect and recycle solar energy to meet all their needs
• they take care for maximal functioning of all biological systems
• and for channeling of all wastes of certain organisms to be the food of other organisms
• they create their own systems by the role-models in nature
• they always combine elements and systems for common support, or synergy
• they support diversity and mould their activities to fit within the framework of natural limitations



Permaculture organizes the activities on the estate to minimize the necessary work and to facilitate circulation of energy and matter. To achieve that the estate is divided in zones: zone 0 is the house, zone 1 is, per example, the part of the garden you visit daily, zone 2 is the part of the garden you visit weekly etc. Last zone (5) is usually left untouched (a part of the woods).

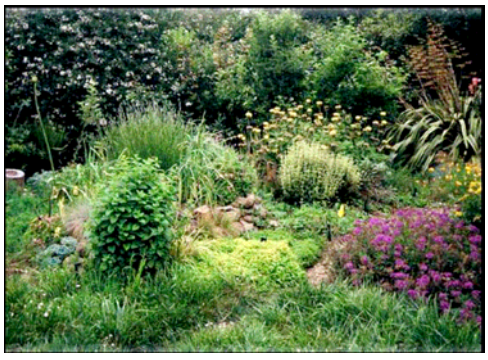
The real test of sustainability of agriculture is, how well it fixates carbon (organic matter) to the soil. It takes trees, bushes, grasses, animals, careful observation, and a new world-view. Mechanized agriculture is incapable of such a worldview, because it originates from agronomy (*law* of the fields). For real sustainable agriculture farmers need to abide by agrology (*science* of the fields) and have a close affinity for Life.

The soil must always be covered and thus protected from the sun and the rain. Covering prevents drying and mud leaching away to the streams and rivers. Erosion drops by up to 90%. Infiltration of rain increases by 30-60%. Consequently there is less need for irrigation. Organic waste creates humus localy and helps bind carbon to the soil—the problem of excess of CO_2 in the atmosphere is ameliorated.

3.3.2. Natural farming by Masanobu Fukuoka

Masanobu Fukuoka is one of the most important pioneers of sustainable farming. His system of farming is called "natural farming", and it took him 25 years of observing and studying the nature to develop it. The essence of the method is maximum reproduction of the natural conditions: farming without plowing, weeding, pruning, fertilizing and spraying with chemicals. The seeds are sown on the surface. Great importance is given to preserving biodiversity—white clover covers the soil at all times to enrich it with nitrogen; weeds are considered a part of the eco-system, they are occasionaly mown down and left to lie on the ground to decompose organically; vegetables are sown as mixed crops, there are no big areas with monocultures.

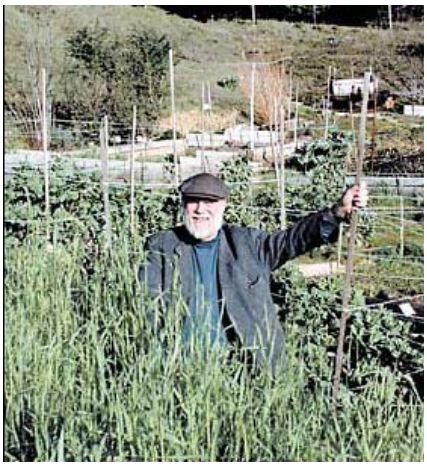
The soil is always covered. The grains area is sown before the previous crop is harvested and after the harvest the remaining straw is used for mulching. Fukuoka's (non)methods bring yields, higher than in conventional farming and with much less financial expense and physical work. High yields are ensured by precise timing of sowing and careful choice of combinations of cultures (policultures). In order for natural farming to work the crucial factor is the investment of consciouss work and careful observation of nature.



Fukuoka claims that artificial fertilizers, though initially efficient, ultimatelly lead to degradation of the soil, erosion and loss of vitality. According to his experience the soil needs to be always covered (like in the nature), either with growing plants or with slowly decomposing plant mass. Such soil allows for sequential cultivation of grains and other crops, and simultaneous improvement of the quality of the soil.

3.3.3. Bio-intensive method of John Jeavons

John Jeavons from the USA is developing bio-intensive method for 30 years. It is applied in 130 countries around the world. He pays attention to the fact there is less and less land per person on Earth, suitable for food production. For this reason he developped bio-intensive farming, a method of micro-farming that secures all the yearly needs for calories of an individual on approximately 400 m2 of land. No machines are used, no artificial fertilizers and no pesticides. Jeavons stresses 70% of the farmland needs to be covered with cultures high in carbon content (rye, barley, amaranth, mangold etc.), to provide sufficient organic matter for composting and regeneration of fertile soil. Approximately 20% of the area is dedicated to vegetables with high vitamin and mineral content (cabbage, tomato, cucumber, broccoli). Not more than 10% of the area is intended for crops to be sold. So, 90% of the farmland is dedicated to self-sufficiency.



Jeavons' reasearch has shown 10% of the crops can be sold without harming the fertility of the farm. Higher percentage could lead to loss of fertility. The shortage would have to be compensated by bringing in fertilizers and organic matter for composting from elsewhere. Jeavons uses all the human urine and excrements as natural composting matter for renewal of the nutrients in the soil.

Thick planting of cultures protects the microorganisms in the soil, decreases evaporation of water and increases yields per unit of farmland. Appropriate plant neighbours optimize nutrient and light usage and stimulate useful insects. The cumulative effect is creation of a micro-eco-system in the garden. Great importance is given to organic matter (humus) in the soil. Humus guarantees that sufficient minerals will stay in the soil ensuring lasting, sustainable farming on the land, that will become even more fertile with passing of years.

4. The organization of Kin's Domain settlement

4.1 Legal dealings

Legaly each Kin's Domain is a separate entity and is the property of the individual family. A Kin's Domain settlement is therefore a cluster of independent Kin’s Domains. Depending on the type and the size of the settlement and the agreements in the community, a part of the settlement can be dedicated to common buildings, rooms and open areas. The property relations on common property are a matter of the agreement. What is important is that each family keeps the proprietorship of (or at least has a gueranteed lifetime lease with the hereditary rigtht and possibility of buying) their own plot of land, big enough to ensure alimental selfsufficiency.

The National branch of The International Ringing Cedars Association represent the inhabitants of the Kin's Domain settlements in all public affairs:

- it manages and puts forward the regulations of Kin's Domain settlements that set the framework of living in the settlement, especially in regions, which are insufficiently regulated by the state legislation
- it represents the common interests of Kin's Domains with the local government, with various administrative agencies, and with non-government organizations
- it provides for financial basis by applying for funds from the ministry offices, municipalities, by colecting donations, selling produce and/or organizing educational programmes for visitors
- in some countries it oversees the quality of the common trademark under which products from Kin's Domain settlements are promoted and sold
- it manages common property, public areas and infrastructure
- it networks collective projects and represents them in public
- it resolves internally all possible conflicts among members; in case of conflicts with outside subjects it appears in court through its legal representatives

4.2 Conditions for joining the Kin's Domain settlement

Dwellers of settlements favour and support a healthy lifestyle and organic food production, therefore according to the regulations of the Association only individuals who sign the agreement of following the settlement's code, may join the settlement. The settlement's code enlists the basic principles of good neighboring relations and of ecological attitude to the environment.

4.3 Common property rationalizes expenses (per example by sharing machines and tools), decreases the ecological footprint of each family on the environment, and provides room for group activities and events for the wider public. Common property may include the following:

- a kin's school
- meeting hall
- a shop
- a restaurant, lodging, camping ground
- common machines
- offices (common computers, internet, printers)
- mill, small hydro, wind and solar powerplant, sawmill, bio-gas plant
- representative sample Kin's Domain for visitors
- water cleaning systems (plant based)
- common pastures, forests

4.4 Communal organization

The maximum size of building area for housing and other structures on each domain is first defined (approximately 1-2%). Rational distribution of infrastructure is determined (of roads, electrical installation, communal infrastructure etc.). In Kin's Domain settlements traffic with motor vehicles is generally not permitted, parking places are provided in the periphery of the village. For cases of urgent intervention, however, there are roads, leading to each domain, that correspond to the legislation on fire safety.



an example of plant water filtering system for the settlement

Slovenia is preparing the operative programme for drainage and cleaning of communal waste water with the latest deadline by the year 2017. By the definitions of this programme all settlements with more than 50 permanent residents (population equivalents – PE) and population density of more than 20 PE per hectare (or more than 10 persons per hectare on water-protected areas and on so called sensitive areas – sensitive in terms of EU "nitrogen directive") will be obliged to use sewage systems and the necessary filtering equipment. Kin's Domain settlements fall into the category of settlements for which sewage systems are not necessary. It is, however, obligatory to use adequate cesspits or smaller communal filtering systems.

Compost toilets are very useful in water handling, preserving the soil fertility and closing the food-circle. They return all organic matter directly to the soil without interfering with the natural cycle of water. They save a lot of water and energy, that standard water toilets waste. Good compost toilets get rid of all pathogenic microorganisms and cause no pollution to underground water. All composting systems can be connected to fishpond systems for water cleaning.

4.5 Care for the kin

Infants and children get to grow in excellent conditions, within a healthy community and peaceful environment. The highest quality food is at their hands. They exercise their bodily and mental abilities with sociable games in nature. Later on they get the best possible education in a stimulating school environment where teachers are not masterful and repressive, but base their work on solidarity. Children join the activities and decision making in the settlement's community quite early. As they are invited to co-create the common atmosphere from a young age they get to feel deep connection, affiliation, responsibility, self-confidence and righteousness. Such an environment contributes greately to demographic stability.

Young dwellers of the settlement quickly learn important skills and routines that are the basis of self-sufficiency. They get to learn the laws of the universe directly in nature, not just indirectly from textbooks. Activities in a clean natural environment allow the children to express freely their physical energy in a way that is conducive to their health and strength.

In Kin's Domain settlements it is possible to organize social projects for youth from the cities, such as workshops of traditional skills and crafts (handmade products, decorations, national garbs, nature friendly construction, etc.), games and sport, work therapies, relaxation, etc.

The elderly can find space in the Kin's Domain settlement for active retirement in an inspiring atmosphere. They can make meaningful contributions to the common goals till the end of their days. Spending time in nature will make their life more healthy and active. Just like in the early kin communities modern Kin's Domain settlements can offer to the elderly all social and financial security, thus gradually the need for retiring pensions will disappear. The elderly feel valued by the younger dwellers of the settlement because they are able to hand down practical wisdom and experience.

4.6 Employment in Kin's Domain settlements

Kin's Domain settlements offer education, maintenance and permanent jobs that contribute to ecological development and ordering of the countryside. A number of individuals dealing with a particular activity creates the necessary concentration for successful marketing. In Kin's Domain settlements there are many possibilities for (self-)employment. In the first place are jobs that add value to the farming and foresting products and services, in addition to:

- organic production of raw materials and final food products
- lodging and tourism
- domestic crafts (pottery, carpentry, basketry, milling …)
- office work, work on distance (writing, translating, planning, administration …)
- education (workshops, courses, seminars)
- medicine and natural healing
- trade, direct marketing
- eco building and production of natural building materials (adobe un-burnt bricks, straw bales, insulations etc.)



Work on the Kin's Domain is of higher quality because of:
- excelent living environment and healthy food
- very low level of stress factors (no daily migrations to work, noise, artificial work conditions etc.)
- a feeling of concrete social and financial security and existential satisfaction
- lower job demands and less pressure, more room for quality and creativity
- positive influence on children as they get to grow up close to their parents and have them as their first and foremost teachers

"The most important jobs should be given to people who are not afraid to lose their job, who do their work from their inner motivation. Only such people will dare to do their job in a fair and honest manner, and by the will of the people, the majority (democratically). They won't succumb to the pressure of lobbyists and political parties." (*Eliza 1,* Tinka Podjavoršek).

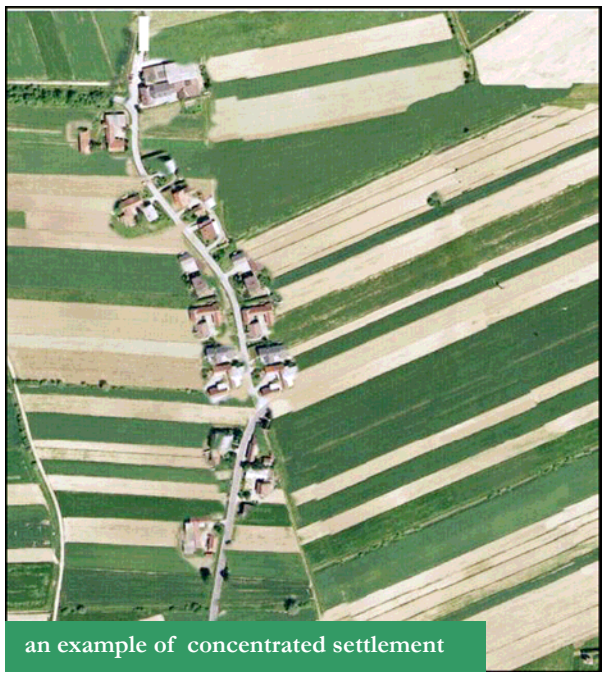
Kin's Domain settlements are a secure environment where people can be creative from their inner motivation and where they are stimulated to express their inner truth.

4.7 Landscape design of Kin's Domain settlements

The land area needed for maintenance of each city dweller is much bigger than in case of eco-village dwellers. Although it is not obvious at first glance, the ecological footprint of modern cities (p. e. London) affects 120 times the area of the city. Eco-villages, on the other hand, fulfill the majority of the needs of each family house (food, energy, materials, waste disposal) on the estate surrounding the house. Meeting the needs is much more effective in the case of people living and working on their own estate, than for people

living in cities. The savings in consumption of energy are huge in terms of transportation of food, goods and wastes, in terms of warehouse maintenance, big roads, railroads, power lines and pipelines. These savings are just the visible material benefit, but even more important are the benefitial influences on the health of people and the planet that stem from direct contact between people and nature.

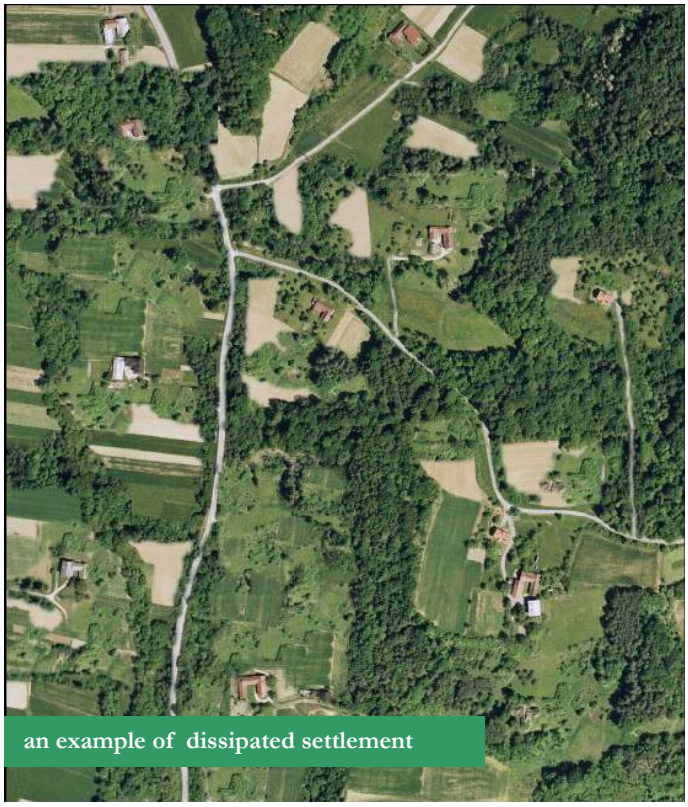
Kin's Domain settlements allow for the formation of larger regions without genetically modified organisms (GMO), chemical fertilizers, and pesticides. A wider circle of ecologically cultivated land around the settlement influences the quality of (underground) water, air and other natural factors better than an individual ecological farm.



an example of concentrated settlement

The law on landscape design favours concentrated settlements for the sake of land economization (chapter 5). From the point of view of suburban settlements such an approach is correct, as it rationalizes the use of the land and of the infrastructural network. Farm land around the concentrated settlements is usually cultivated by machines, which is yet another negative influence on the environment. Instead of having the high density of the settlement protect nature (due to more economic use of the land), intensive farming (the greatest single water and soil polluter in the world) is responsible for ineffective utilization of agricultural premises, for decrease of biodiversity and extinction of species. Landscape design that protects large agricultural areas for cultivation of monocultures doesn't protect nature, it supports wasteful and harmful machine cultivation. Such design is effective only in the present economic situation, where many environmental expenses are externalized.

Kin's Domain settlements are based on poli-culture and permaculture, therefore it is not rational to use concentrated design for them. Only dissipated settlement design allows for formation of undivided estates, poli-culture cultivation, direct contact with nature, formation of a holistic intimate space for each family. Distances between the domains are small enough to enable social interactions within walking distances.



an example of dissipated settlement

4.8 Setting up Kin's Domain settlement (example of Slovenia)

The pattern of populating the land in Slovenia is a typically dense inhabitation of lowland (plain) areas. 60% of all the population inhabits less then 20% of the territory. In the hilly sub-alpine and dinaric-karst areas the population is scarce, with predominantly smaller dispersed settlements and aging population. A similar situation is present in the regions close to the state border. It would be most appropriate to set up Kin's Domain settlements particularly in the demographically endangered regions, thus bringing them back to life in the best possible way. For the future inhabitants of the settlements such regions are the most attractive as they are usually the purest and the most adequate for the desired settlement design. Among appropriate locations for Kin's Domain settlements are deserted villages and overgrown lands. The best agricultural farming lands and areas in the close vicinity of larger towns are momentarily not appropriate for the setting up of Kin's Domain settlements.

4.9 Historical development of landscape design (in Slovenia)

In the old days on the territory of Slovenia, Slovenians, or Western Slavs used to live in peaceful kin communities. According to the prodiminating theories they moved to the region of eastern Alps that was left behind by the Romans somewhere between 4th and 10th century. There are some proofs, however, of their presence in the wider area of the Alps. It is evident they usually built their settlements in remote hilly regions, where they lived in closely connected kin communities. All we know about them for sure is they were organized in some sort of village parishes and inter-generational families. The soil was cultivated manually for self-sustenance and in harmony with the community. They used to live in simple one-room houses made from wooden beams with thached roofs and a fireplace in the middle. They didn't build sanctuaries or churches. They lived in close connection with nature.

Western Slavs didn't manage to form a military organization (or they didn't desire to form it), thus their land was divided among various feudal lords, mostly coming from the German speaking lands. These lords began implementing the already tested ways: they divided the uncultivated land into long narrow plots. At the beginning of each plot, at a right angle to the road, they constructed quickly built series of same oblong houses. The new villages that were established in this way were completely different from the old ones. New landscape design was concieved to facilitate the control over life and work of the inhabitants. Gradually, the old self-sustainable lifestyle disappeared. Landscape design known today is very much marked by the feudal design. Such design is inadequate for long-term, ecological development of the countryside. It is no wonder so many incentives are striving for the appropriate modernization of the existing landscape design policies. Many European countries are strugling with similar outmoded landscape design regulations.

5. The advantages of small farms

In the last 250 years the percentage of the population working on the land continually decreased. Paralel to that, the size of farms kept increasing, supposedly increasing their productivity and efficiency as well. But, when you compare the actual data you arrive at the exact opposite conclusion: smaller farms produce much more per each unit of land then bigger farms. Nowadays big farms can survive only beacause they are supported by large agricultural subsidies.

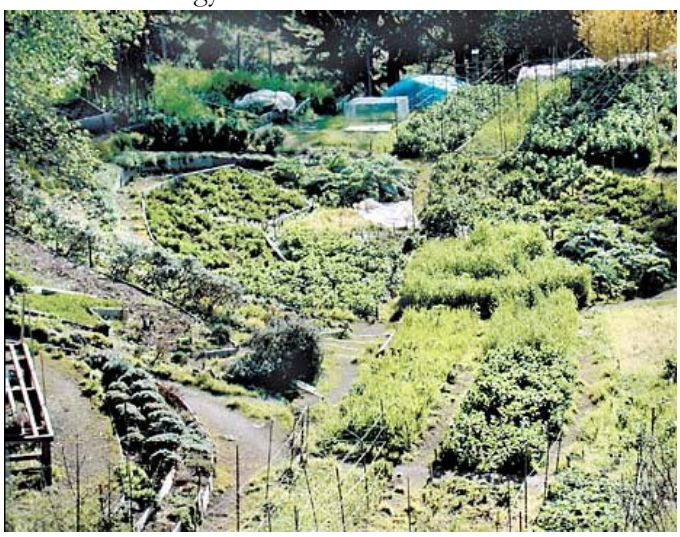
The most developed European countries have already taken the important initial steps towards increasing the taxes on everything, harmful to people and the environment (taxes on fossil fuels, coal mines, automobiles, cigarettes, alcohol). It is also necessary to cancel the subsidies for harmful activities and begin the redirection of these funds to the projects that support sustainable development. According to estimations of the Worldwatch Institute harmful annual subsidies amount to 700 billion dollars per year.

Agricultural miniaturization is nothing new. Small farms have sustainably supported the development and existence of great civilizations from the Chinese 4000 years ago, to Mayan, South American, Greek and Roman 2000 years ago. In the present Russia around 70% of families (14.7 million families) own a dacha or a small garden (0.06 ha, 0.15 acre). It is not unusual that a family satisfies most of its nutritional needs on this small plot of land (they grow 90% of potatoes, 77% berry and fruit cultures, 73% vegetables).

Bio-intensive method of micro-farming enables the farmer to grow sufficient amount of calories for the annual needs of one individual on 400 m^2 or less, while conventional farming uses from 1500 to 3000 m^2 of land for each individual. In biointensive method the need for energy (oil) drops by 94-99%, the needs for fertilizers and watering decrease greatly as well, while the input of human work increases considerably.

On small areas (1-3 ha) it is possible to attain much higher yields per unit of land then on vast areas, planted with monoculture. The argument in favor of the efficiency of intensive farming is large crops with very few workers, while ecological farming requires more workers. Monocultures have temporary economic advantages, but in the long run they don't represent the ecologic optimum. The quantity of crops with poli-culture (eco) farming per unit of land is bigger, more variagated and healthier than in conventional farming; there is less or no need for mechanisation, oil and agrochemicals; biodiversity is preserved. With the adequate distribution of habitats, plants and animals on the area of the estate, it is possible to reach the

stage, where the factor of success is not primarily the amount of physical work invested in the property, but the conscious contact of the owner with the land. This then regulates all the biological processes and currents of energy on the domain.



For more than a century economists have been forecasting waning of small farms. They marked them as "regressive, nonproductive and inefficient." In the present visions of future, however, small farms are receiving and increasingly prominent position. In contrast to the convictions of the economists, small farms can produce much more food than big farms and they can more easily feed the increasing population of the Earth. Besides, the small farms are multifunctional: they serve the local economy, society and biosphere. They don't only produce food.

The classic example of why big farms seem more efficient is the following ilustration. To harvest the greatest possible amount of wheat on 1000 ha of land, the best results are obtained by planting a monoculture with machine and chemical treatment. But all this land will produce only wheat. For the remaining part of the year the soil will be barren and expossed to erosion. The land will serve only one function. If this area was covered with small multifunctional farms, cultivating many other cultures besides wheat, they would ultimately grow much less wheat per 1000 ha of land, they would, however, grow a variety of alimentary and nonalimentary products, and the land would offer excelent dwelling places and jobs for many families.

"Industrial farming with mass production feeds three quarters of humanty with varieties of just 10 different species of plants. Compare that with a bushman tribe, whose diet consists of 85 different plant species. There are hundreds of thousands plant species in nature, of which only some are poisonous or inedible. Natural plant unions are such an efficient producers of new biomass, that when compared to it, the artificial agro-system is a complete fiasco, and only a fool's pride. All 'magnificent' achievements of agro-chemistry dwindle at the fact that the increase of biomass on the most intense farming lands in the world is on the level of semi deserts. No need for comment!" *Komat Anton, The Decline of the Promethean Age.*

Some other advantages of small farms:

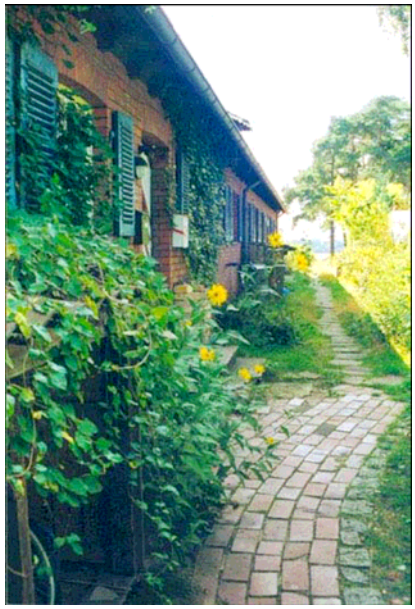
- Conventional farming uses up the fertile soil 18- to 80-times faster than it is created in nature. By some estimations at the present rate of cultivation there is only enough fertile soil on Earth for 40 to 80 years of farming. Some practices of ecological mini-farming are rebuilding the soil up to 60-times faster than it forms in nature; plus they minimize the use of resources and energy.
- The number of people producing food is decreasing, thus the wealth of knowledge that was gathered through the centuries is disappearing. On smaller farms more people are engaged in the natural process of food production. Therefore, general knowledge about these processes improves as does the respect and care for the environment.
- More than 90 % of all seeds, used by people in the past to produce food, are already extinct. Genetic varieties are decreasing due to the convencional farming, which relies simply on a few specialized varieties. Smaller farms maintain the variegatedness of the existing genetic stock of old cultural plants.
- Conventional farming uses around 100 times more energy per pound of produced food compared to intensive organic methods, predominantly because of dependence on machines and energetically wasteful chemical fertilizers. On smaller properties the nutrients and energy get to circulate much easier, thus decreasing the use of energy even more.
- Global farming is the greatest consumer of drinking water (ca. 80 %). Conventional farming doesn't save the water in the ground, it washes out the nutrients and decreases the levels of underground water. Organic methods, on the other hand, save underground water. Advanced ecological methods on smaller farms lead to decrease in water consumption, pollution, and lessen the influence of draughts and floods.

6. Agreement with the regulations of RS and EU

The concept of Kin's Domain settlements is not defined in the legal documents of Slovenia and the EU. In the existing laws (the landscape design regulations, building regulations, law of environment preservation) there is concordance of principles with the Kin's Domain concept. The new aspect is the usage of land, which is neither defined as housing area nor farming area, but a combination of both. This opens the need of new juridical term—Kin's Domain.

6.1 The law of landscape design

In the 2nd paragraph of The Landscape Design Regulations we read: "Sustainable landscape development means providing for such utilization of land and landscape design, which—along with protecting the environment, preserving nature and sustainable use of natural resources, protecting the cultural heritage and other elements, that are necessary for quality natural and dwelling environment—ensures fulfilment of needs of the present generation without jeopardizing the future generations." This definition is perfectly in tune with the Kin's Domain settlements concept.



The 3rd paragraph further defines the principles of landscape design in perfect concordance with the concept of Kin's Domain settlements: "it needs to achieve a harmonious spatial and mutually complementing arrangement of various activities on the landscape … It has to ensure spatial posibilities for harmonious development of the community … ensure preservation of the environment, protection of natural and cultural heritage … allow for sustainable usage of natural resources while protecting the quality of the natural and dwelling environments."

In Paragraph 5 there are guidelines on the optimal population of the state territory: "… new citizens need to be directed to populating areas; … The expansion of the population should generally be directed to areas that are less important in regards to sustainable use of natural resources and preservation of nature and cultural heritage; … primarily barren and inadequatelly used areas in existing settlements should be populated, by reactivating them and by the renovation and sanation of degraded areas in the existing settlements."

Kin's Domain settlements are built primarily on the areas of existing villages, mostly on deserted and demographically endangered areas. In other words, this is "a renovation and sanation" of the deserted areas. The construction of objects on each property is regulated to minimize the possible misuse of fertile soil.

6.2 Strategy for preservation of biodiversity in Slovenia

"Strategy for the preservation of biodiversity in Slovenia" is a document, in which support to the concept of settlements similar to Kin's Domain settlements may be found in many ways:

- Regional development based on sustainable development.
- Encouragement of activities, that utilize the development possibilities of the areas with preserved biodiversity in such a way that they preserves and protects it without endangering it.
- Stimulation of eco-farming and support to marketing of organic products from protected areas.
- Implementation of agricultural-environmental programmes that help with the preservation of important habitats and improve rentability of farms with extensive farming production.
- Support of such modernization and renewal of the rural economy, which contributes to better harmony with nature and lower burdening of the environment.
- Stimulation of economic diversification and development of supplementary activities on farms, based on preserved biodiversity.
- Encouraging connections between cultural programmes with the programmes of biodiversity preservation and protection of cultural heritage.

6.3 Countryside development programme

Documents *Countryside Development Programme of RS for Period 2007 – 2013* and *Strategic Guidelines of European Union for Countriside Development* give guidelines that directly support the lifestyle in ecological Kin's Domain settlements. Great importance is given to the protection of nature, the creation of new jobs on farms and adding value to farming products. Core guidelines of the countryside development programme are:

- improving the state of environment and countryside
- improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of rural economy
- creation of local facilities for employment and diversification

The Slovenian countryside development programme strongly supports the development of organic farming, which includes the concept of ecological Kin's Domain settlements: "Organic farming is a form of farming with a particular importance in Slovenian agriculture. It contributes greatly to the provisions of public goods, protection or improvement of biodiversity, preservation of sources of drinking water, protection of the cultural farming landscape and environment. It also ensures production of safe, high-quality food with high nutritional values, and influences to the greatest possible degree sustainable treatment of non-renewable resources and assertion of the principle of stock-friendly breeding.

The demand for organic foodstufs is increasing every day due to greater sensitivity of consumers, and also due to health, environment and animal rights issues. Consumers are mostly looking for organic vegetables and fruits.

Given its excelent natural atrributes Slovenia has great potential for swift development in the area of organic farming. The preservation of biodiversity is high. The range and variagatedness of habitats is good. There are great regional peculiarities, therefore care needs to be taken mostly to preserve these for the future generations. To the greatest extent this can be done by environmentally friendly agricultural technologies, by preserving agricultural activities in the areas that are under a threat of being abandoned and overgrown, and also by the sustainable utilisation of forests."

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7. Resources

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