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## **SUSTAINABLE STORY BORN FROM THE NEED OF COMMUNITY - THE HEART OF SLOVENIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Cities are becoming the centre of the world development and will be home to the majority of the planet's inhabitants in next few decades. How are urban and rural post-socialistic areas going to develop? Can the quality of life be considered as a priority? The brand The Heart of Slovenia is unique in the sense that it was originally born from the need of community. Initial impulse was to build a common identity based on shared values of rural areas around the capital city of Slovenia which is substantially different from the urban part. The Development Centre of the Heart of Slovenia managed to connect a great number of stake holders: individuals, organizations, initiatives and projects that bring tangible results for everyone who lives and works in the area but also for visitors and tourists. A network based on the potentials and capabilities of the participants who are co-creating the brand using and involving existing sources or systems (such as municipal structures, EU financial sources, national institutions) at the same time has been developed. Brand as such is applied in geographical terms to outline certain part of Slovenia (around the geographical centre of the state) and in marketing term to distinguish services and products that fulfil standards based on sustainable growth. Social innovation is embodied in all activities and recognized in the results. This approach can be implemented in different environments and used as a best practice that empowers the new way of thinking and acting in a changing world.*