ZiP | INSTITUTE FOR INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CURRICULUM VITAE

JANJA VIHER

Senior EU Project Manager and Development Expert

Partner

Tourism · agri-food · circular economy · rural development · digital innovation

janja.viher@zipiie.eu · +386 31 669 949 · linkedin.com/in/janja-viher-90ab49299

30+	100+	4	45+
years of experience	European projects	Horizon Europe work packages	advisory clients

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Senior project manager, managing director and development expert with more than 30 years of experience across public administration, tourism, regional and rural development, agriculture, hospitality, entrepreneurship and digitalisation. She has contributed to more than 100 European and more than 100 national projects and covers the full project lifecycle: strategic concept, proposal preparation, consortium and stakeholder building, implementation, work package coordination, reporting, dissemination, capacity building and exploitation of results. Her strongest contribution is turning complex policy and research objectives into practical pilots, partnerships and market-facing services. She has led public bodies, development agencies, a destination management organisation and multidisciplinary teams.

CORE COMPETENCES

- Horizon Europe and Interreg
- work package leadership
- consortium and partner development
- proposal and concept development
- stakeholder and policy engagement
- project implementation and reporting
- impact, dissemination and exploitation
- training and capacity building
- pilot and living-lab coordination
- tourism and destination development
- agri-food and short supply chains
- circular economy and digitalisation

SELECTED EUROPEAN AND CROSS-BORDER PROJECTS

BIKE & SPA	Interreg Slovenia–Austria, 2024–2027	cross-border cycling and wellness product, quality standards, partnerships
URBAN SOIL 4 FOOD	Urban Innovative Actions, 2017–2023	circular economy, urban food self-sufficiency, social innovation
FLAGSHIP PRODUCTS	Interreg Slovenia–Austria, 2016–2019	development and internationalisation of flagship tourism products
Maribor-Pohorje destination	22 municipalities, 2011–2017	strategy, governance, digital promotion, green certification
REGIO VITALIS	Slovenia–Austria, 2010–2014	health and wellness tourism, employment, cross-border value
OFELIA · REC4SMEs (COSME) · VERNE	Green Point, ITC	short supply chains, energy communities, digital community solutions
INNO-RURAL · LEADER / LAG Ovtar	since 2007	rural innovation, local food chains, local development strategy

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2025–	**Smartomate d.o.o.** · CEO and co-founder – AI solutions for tourism and services; Slovenian Enterprise Fund support and three EU micro-grants; Spotvibez development and market positioning.
2025–	**ITC / DIH AGRIFOOD** · Senior Project Manager, expert in circular economy and agri-food innovation – Partner ecosystems; leads work packages in four Horizon Europe consortia.
2026–	**Green Point cooperative (Zelena točka)** · Director – Short food supply chains and traceability; national pilot centre in Murska Sobota.
2017–	**ZIP – Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship** · Senior Project Manager and co-founder – EU and national projects: innovation, tourism, local food, smart villages; co-holder of a patent (URBAN SOIL 4 FOOD).
2016–	**Agencija SIV d.o.o.** · Managing Director and Business Adviser – Strategy, EU funding, tourism, local development; 45+ clients, 100+ projects.
2020–2022	**PRIZMA Foundation** · Senior Project Manager – EU projects, partner coordination, training.
2012–2017	**Maribor-Pohorje Tourist Board** · Managing Director – DMO for 22 municipalities: strategy, finance, marketing, products, investment.
2011–2012	**Maribor Development Agency** · Project Manager – POLYINVEST project and regional development coordination.
2007–2011	**Slovenske gorice Development Agency** · Managing Director – LEADER and LAG Ovtar, tourist information centre, cross-border projects.
1995–2006	**Municipality of Kungota** · Head of Finance and Economy; Director of Municipal Administration – Public finance, economic development, agriculture, tourism, investment.

ADDED VALUE IN EU PROJECTS

- Cross-sector reach: links research organisations, SMEs, municipalities, destinations, cooperatives, farms, hospitality providers, NGOs and public authorities.
- Policy to practice: turns strategic objectives into pilots, governance models, training, business cases and operational services.
- Territorial impact: rural, regional, cross-border and widening-region innovation ecosystems.
- Communication and transfer: more than 100 training activities, editorial experience, public speaking and mentoring.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATES

- postgraduate studies in Tourism – University of Ljubljana and Faculty of Commercial and Business Sciences (thesis pending)
- Graduate Economist – Business Management, DOBA / University of Maribor, 2008
- Certified Supervisory Board Member (2007)
- Administrative Procedure Act exam; NGO management (130 h); licensed regional tourist guide

NETWORKS AND GOVERNANCE ROLES

- DIH AGRIFOOD expert community; international Smart Villages ecosystem (Bern)
- chair of the SmartAlp committee (Italy, Switzerland, France, Austria, Slovenia)
- chair of LAG Štajerska, board member of LAG Ovtar
- vice-president of the Tourist Association of Slovenia and of the Styrian Tourist Association

LANGUAGES

Slovenian (native) · English (working proficiency) · Croatian, Serbian (good) · German (basic)