

Blended
Intensive
Programme

BIP

Rivers and Cities

Living with Urban Streams and Flows

Virtual mobility
10th and 17th April 2026

Physical mobility
from 23th to 27th April 2026
Ljubljana, Department of Architecture



Funded by
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FA

UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
Faculty of Architecture

BLENDED INTENSIVE PROGRAMME

RIVERS AND CITIES: LIVING

WITH URBAN STREAMS AND FLOWS

(2025-1-SI01-KA131-HED-000326434-11)

part of Territorial Innovation Summer School Series

Virtual mobility

10th and **17th** April 2026

Physical mobility

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University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture



Institutional Partners

Municipality of Škofja Loka



Cooperating Partners

University of Ljubljana,
Faculty of Architecture



University of Palermo,
Department of Architecture



Università Politecnica delle Marche,
Department of Construction, Civil Engineering and Architecture, research group H4HH



Leibniz University Hannover,
Institute of Urban Design and Planning



Estonian Academy of Arts, Department of
Urban Studies, Faculty of Architecture



Scientific committee

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Organising Committee

Matevž Juvančič, Nina Povše.

Tutors

Maja Vetrlih, Ela Zaletel.

Introduction

The “*Rivers and cities*” workshop in the new **Erasmus+ Programme BIP (Blended Intensive Programme)** is the fourth event in a series, the itinerant laboratory for territorial innovation first initiated by the Leibniz University Hannover, which combines the skills of partners with multiple challenges in different situations applying innovative approaches in urban planning, design and architecture that are the subject of the partners’ methodological research.

After the Territorial Innovation Summer School “TOWN CENTRE PATHWAYS WORKSHOP” in Hannover, the Territorial Innovation Summer School “TOWARDS JESI 2050 VISIONS FOR TRANSITIONAL URBAN HABITATS” in Jesi - Ancona and “URBAN AMPLIFIERS” in Palermo, the fourth edition of the Territorial Innovation Summer School is organised by the Faculty of Architecture, University of Ljubljana.

The **Territorial Innovation Summer School** focuses on urban and metropolitan habitats and aims to implement strategies and concrete actions to pursue climate neutrality, the inclusion of diverse communities and new economic opportunities based on cultural, green and digital innovation. The spatial forms that take into account the new organisation of living spaces, the most flexible combination of living and working, the focus on social and spare time activities, the promotion of social innovation and the opportunities of the circular economy are addressed from an urbanist perspective. The skills and techniques of urban planning, design and architecture are integrated with those of sustainable mobility, service design, civil engineering, geographical and social disciplines and ecological sciences.

Theme: *Rivers and Cities: Living with Urban Streams and Flows*

Rivers and streams have always fundamentally shaped the emergence, form, and development of cities and urban life. Throughout history, their role has continuously evolved - from primary sources of water and irrigation, means of transportation, drivers of production and industrial power, and systems for trade, waste, and sewage disposal, to contemporary spaces of leisure, bathing, sport, contemplation, and relaxation.

At the same time, rivers have always embodied an element of danger: unpredictability, force, flooding, and uncontrollability. They represent a paradoxical presence in human settlements - extremely beneficial and essential to life, yet potentially destructive and mortally dangerous.

The town of **Škofja Loka**, with its long and layered history, was strategically established at the confluence of two sister rivers - **Selška and Poljanska Sora**. Over centuries, it has experienced and lived through all of the roles and transformations described above. The narratives emerging from changing attitudes toward rivers and river spaces - together with analytical studies, local knowledge, and the visions and aspirations of both authorities and residents - will form the foundation and inspiration for the students’ design proposals.

The workshop will focus on **five distinct ambiances along the Sora rivers**, which differ significantly in their history, present use, character, degree of centrality, and natural and geomorphological conditions. These include places for summer swimming, areas of living and working, the re-imagining of former industrial sites, the sustainable accessibility of river embankments, and the mitigation of flooding and torrential risks through nature-based, resilient, and sustainable design approaches.



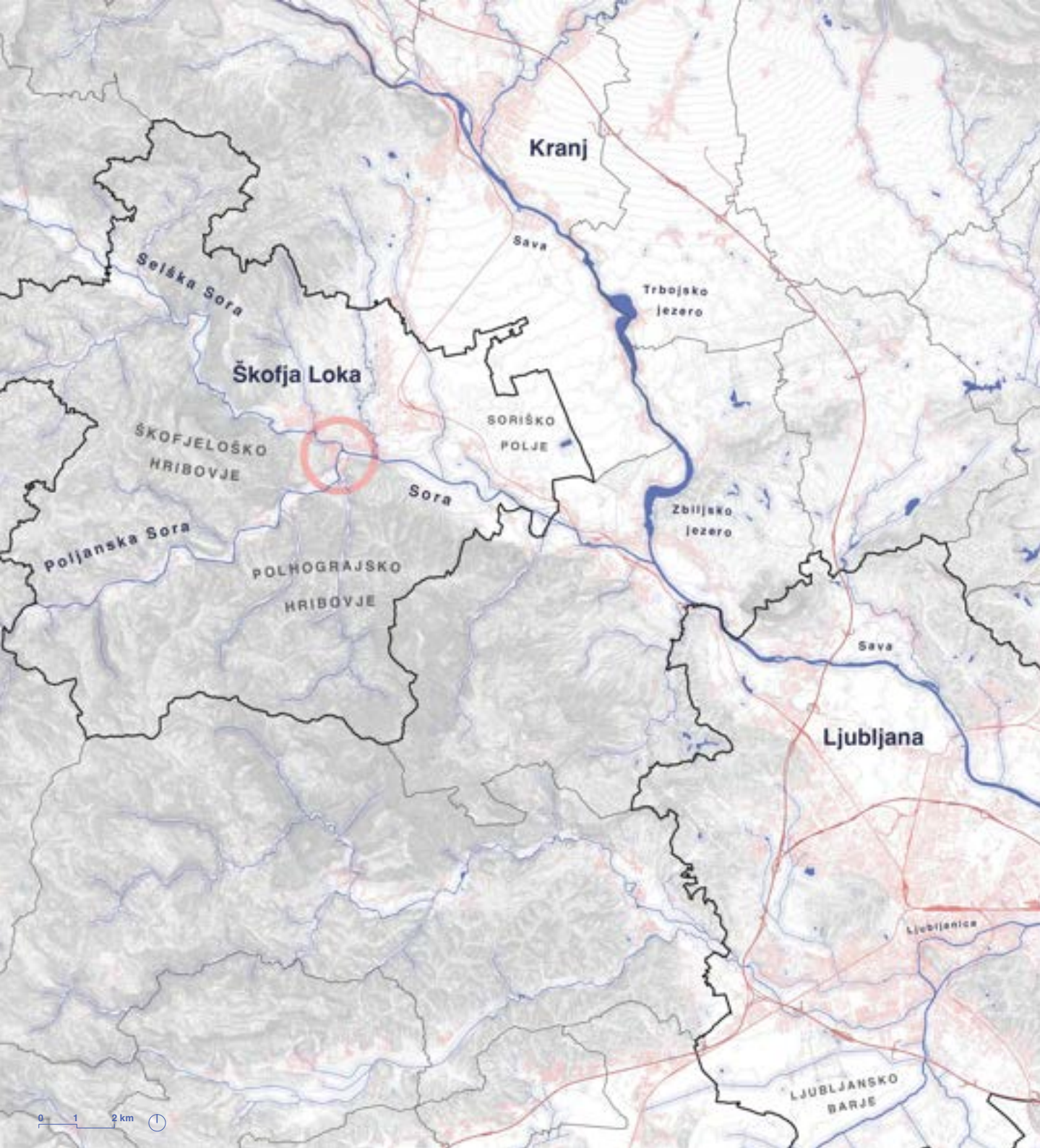
As the workshop will be primarily based in Ljubljana - a city whose name and identity are deeply connected to the Ljubljanica River - participants will have numerous opportunities to compare experiences, overlapping characteristics, and differences in scale, intensity of use, exploitation, and spatial character between the two river environments. With the Faculty of Architecture located directly along the river embankments, students will have immediate access to observe, explore, and reflect on what it means to live with urban streams and flows.

The program will also highlight how the inhabitants of Ljubljana have lived with the Ljubljanica River throughout history - from the earliest settlements to the present day - and will bring these experiences closer to participants through guided boat ride and city walks, anecdotal narratives, and first-hand accounts.

To better understand the challenges of living with rivers and mitigating their forces, the workshop will explore the transition from engineering-based approaches toward nature-based and design-driven solutions. Experts in the field will be invited, together with international workshop mentors, to share their professional experience and present best-practice examples from abroad.



The Municipality of Škofja Loka is located in the central part of the Gorenjska region and lies approximately a 30-minute drive from Ljubljana (22.8 km) and 18 km from Jože Pučnik Airport (Brnik).



Objectives and aspects to explore

- ① To examine, envision and design places along the Sora rivers for different uses, originating from the present tendencies, from user appropriation practices, historical sediments, habits, city plans and inhabitants' initiatives
- ② With an emphasis on *public spaces*, spaces for sport and recreation, places for relaxation and contemplation, new residential areas, mixed use and place-making
- ③ Offering diverse and *authentic places with the respect to cultural and historical contexts*, allowing and providing access to water, with respect to nature and identity of the places
- ④ Offering *diverse variety of experience*: from open, social, flexible, urban to more secluded, intimate, contemplative and quiet environments
- ⑤ Opening *new views towards water*, new *perspectives on river space use*, new opportunities to be connected with water and its biotope to inhabitants and visitors alike
- ⑥ Making the *design proposals future sustainable and resilient* both in terms of use, function, and with flowing and torrential water associated challenges, while maintaining a level of flexibility and adaptability built into their design to embrace unpredicted changes
- ⑦ Giving priority to *sustainable, nature based, design driven solutions* against flooding and torrents before technologically mechanical ones
- ⑧ *Rethinking and reimagining former industrial sites and brownfields*, zero net building stock reuse and renewal, building with locally sourced materials, introducing traditional handicrafts, local products and involving citizen participation
- ⑨ To draw *comparisons between Škofja Loka and Ljubljana*, between Soras and Ljubljanica river spaces, their character and nature, between rivers spaces from past experience, best practice cases and rivers spaces dealt with at the BIP

Methodology *and* Outcomes

The BIP workshop will operate in two complementary formats: a virtual, long-distance phase and a physical, face-to-face phase, further divided into lectures and expert presentations, exploratory work on site(s) and work on the projects at the faculty. The pedagogy is based on learning through case studies and best-practice examples, combined with the development of design proposals for real, concrete locations under the guidance of mentors and tutors.

Virtual phase

Online workshop

10th and 17th April 2026

Virtual phase - the online phase will be held in **two sessions in April 2026** and will include the following activities:

- *Introduction of partner universities and participating students*, followed by a short exchange of participants' previous experiences with river spaces and personal memories associated with them, conducted in the form of roundtable discussions;
- *Presentation of Škofja Loka* as the main case study and Ljubljana as the host and event location, followed by an introduction to the workshop themes, key topics, and overall objectives;
- *Formation of student groups*, allocation of analytical and data-preparation tasks, and dedicated time for groups to meet, get to know one another, and plan the work ahead;

An interim review session will be held one week later, also online, during which the preparatory work produced by student groups will be discussed, evaluated, and refined;

During this phase, each partner institution will prepare a poster presenting best-practice examples of river-space design and nature-based flood mitigation strategies. These posters will be exhibited during the physical phase of the BIP as part of an exhibition–debate event at the faculty.

Outline

10th April 2026

- 14:00** Introduction
- 14:15** *Presentation of partner universities*
- 15:00** Short break
- 15:15** *Presentation of Škofja Loka*
and indications for preliminary analysis
- 16:00** *Debate and groups of students*
- 17:00** Closure of work

17th April 2026

- 14:00** Introduction
- 14:15** *Inputs about analysis*
- 16:00** *Collective interaction*
- 16:15** Short break
- 16:30** General remarks and Ljubljana - Škofja Loka
in presence activities program
- 17:00** Closure of work

The town of Škofja Loka is situated at the confluence of the Selca and Poljane Sora rivers, at the transition from the Sorško Polje plain into the Škofja Loka and Polhov Gradec hills. Most of the municipality belongs to the pre-Alpine hilly landscape, while the lowland around the town forms part of the Ljubljana Basin. This geographical setting allows for a close integration of urban areas with nature, characterised by riverbanks, extensive forests, and notable natural features such as the Reteške Loke wetlands, Lubnik Cave, Mary's Abyss, Devil's Bridge, and the castle garden with its lime-tree avenue.

Škofja Loka is one of the best-preserved medieval town centres in Slovenia. It comprises *Mestni Trg* (Town Square) and *Spodnji Trg* (Lower Square) and is protected as a cultural monument. Above the town rise the hills of *Krancelj*, *Štangruf*, *Kamnitnik*, and *Lubnik*. On a rocky promontory above the town stands *Škofja Loka Castle*, now home to the *Škofja Loka Museum*.

The town's history dates back to the Middle Ages, when a settlement known as Loka developed along the riverbanks. Later renamed Škofja Loka, it was first mentioned as a town in 1274. In the early 14th century, it was fortified with defensive walls, much of which have been preserved to this day. Despite numerous disasters throughout its history, most notably the earthquake of 1511, the town's urban layout has remained largely unchanged.

Since 2016, the Škofja Loka Passion Play has been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Škofja Loka has a rich industrial heritage, marked by former companies such as Šešir, LTH, Odeja, Elra, Kroj, and Termo (now Knauf Insulation).



Workshop in Škofja Loka (and Ljubljana)

from **23th** to **27th** April 2026

The BIP programme has been jointly developed and builds upon a refined framework established through previous iterations of the Territorial Innovation BIP series. The programme is coordinated by the organizer and strategically guided by representatives of all partner institutions involved.

Each partner contributes academic staff, mentors, and students, as well as thematic content in the form of lectures, presentations, and consultations. International participation is ensured through the established partnership network, while local engagement is provided through collaboration with the municipality of the selected location, local teachers, experts, mentors, and students.

In addition, on-site work will enable direct interaction with local residents, allowing spontaneous encounters and everyday experiences to inform the learning and design process.

Thematic framework and location:

Rivers and streams have fundamentally shaped the emergence and development of cities, influencing their structure, identity, and everyday life. Throughout history, they have served as sources of water and energy, transport routes, and systems of production and disposal, while today increasingly functioning as spaces of leisure, recreation, and social life.

At the same time, rivers represent an inherently dynamic and unpredictable element, capable of both sustaining and threatening urban settlements. Living with rivers therefore requires a continuous balance between use, protection, and coexistence.

Škofja Loka, located at the confluence of the Selška and Poljanska Sora rivers, offers a rich case study of these evolving relationships. The workshop will explore five distinct river ambiances, differing in history, character, use, and geomorphological conditions — from everyday living spaces and swimming areas to former industrial sites and flood-prone landscapes.

Objectives

- To *analyze and design river spaces* along the Sora rivers based on historical layers, present uses, and local identity;
- To *develop public, recreational, residential, and mixed-use river environments* that strengthen everyday relationships between city and water;
- To *create diverse spatial experiences*, ranging from open and social to quiet and contemplative settings;
- To *improve access to water* while respecting ecological systems and river biotopes;
- To *promote resilient and adaptable design strategies* addressing flooding and climate-related challenges;
- To *prioritize nature-based and sustainable design approaches* over purely technical solutions;
- To *rethink former industrial areas through adaptive reuse*, local materials, and participatory processes;
- To *compare river spaces of Škofja Loka and Ljubljana* with international best-practice examples.



Workshop schedule

Day ONE - 23th April (Thursday)

where: University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture
Zoisova cesta 12, 1000 Ljubljana

16:00 Welcome and introduction

prof. Mihael Dešman,
Dean, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture

16:30 Collective Inputs

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture
Matevž Juvančič, Nina Povše

University of Palermo
Maurizio Carta, Barbara Lino, Daniele Ronsivalle

Leibniz University Hannover
Jörg Schröder, Federica Scaffidi

Polytechnic University of Marche
Maddalena Ferretti

Estonian Academy of Arts
Sean Thomas Tyler, Nabeel Imtiaz, Maros Krivy

20:00 Boat night tour of the Ljubljana

Day TWO - 24th April (Friday)

where: Škofja Loka

8:00 Central railway station

Ljubljana - Trata

9:00 Welcome and meeting at the Municipality of Škofja Loka

guided tour of workshop locations, Katarina Rus

11:00 Exploration of the city and project area

14:00 Lunch break

15:00 Field work

19:00 Round of critics

Exchange with all students about first findings and ideas

Day THREE - 25th April (Saturday)

where: University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture
Zoisova cesta 12, 1000 Ljubljana

9:00 Group work

13:00 Lunch break

14:00 Group work

17:00 Round of critics

Exchange with all students about first findings and ideas

19:00 Tour of the Ljubljana

assoc. prof. Aleksander Ostan

Day FOUR - 26th April (Sunday)

where: University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture
Zoisova cesta 12, 1000 Ljubljana

9:00 Group work

13:00 Lunch break

14:00 Exploring Urban Life along the Ljubljana Riverside

Independent group work

Day FIVE - 27th April (Monday)

where: University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture
Zoisova cesta 12, 1000 Ljubljana

9:30 Public presentations of the groups and concluding remarks

13:00 Closing

Škofja Loka

project areas

The area comprises a well-preserved historic town centre, newer urban areas, and surrounding settlements. Craftsmanship and industry have long shaped local development, leaving a notable industrial heritage, although many former enterprises are no longer active.

Environmental quality is high, particularly in surface waters. The Selca and Poljane Sora rivers and the Sora in Reteče achieve good chemical and ecological status, with very good ecological status at the Puštal bathing area. At the same time, the municipality is exposed to natural hazards, especially floods and landslides, which strongly influence spatial planning.

Key development challenges include protecting the natural environment, regenerating degraded urban areas, and revitalising the historic town centre. Despite its exceptional cultural heritage, the old town faces pressures from traffic, slow renovation, and limited private investment. An integrated spatial and functional renewal is essential to improve quality of life, strengthen tourism, and attract investment.



①

LTH and the Selca Sora River

The LTH site along the Selca Sora River represents a former industrial area with a strong impact on the river corridor and the surrounding urban fabric. While historically important for the economic development of Škofja Loka, the area today constitutes an underutilised and environmentally sensitive site. Its location along the river offers significant potential for regeneration through the remediation of industrial land, improvement of riverfront accessibility, and the introduction of compatible mixed-use or public functions, contributing to environmental enhancement and sustainable urban development.

where: Vincarje 2, 4220 Škofja Loka



②

Selca Sora Gorge and Bridges

The Selca Sora Gorge with its bridges is a prominent natural and spatial feature characterised by steep riverbanks, high landscape and ecological value, and a series of bridges that connect urban areas and surrounding settlements. The gorge represents an important natural corridor and recreational area, combining natural heritage with cultural and infrastructural elements, and requires careful management to preserve its environmental quality while enhancing public accessibility and sustainable use.

where: From Vincarje to the Selca Bridge, Škofja Loka



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The Slaughterhouse by the Sora River

The Slaughterhouse by the Sora River is a poorly integrated and underutilised site located in the historic town centre of Škofja Loka, directly along the Sora River. Due to its current function and location within a culturally and environmentally sensitive area, the site represents an inappropriate land use and a significant spatial constraint. At the same time, it offers considerable potential for redevelopment into a public, cultural, recreational, or mixed-use area that would enhance the riverfront, improve the quality of the urban environment, and strengthen the vitality of the town centre.

where: Studenec 3, 4220 Škofja Loka



4

Confluence of the Selca and Poljane Sora Rivers

The confluence of the Selca and Poljane Sora rivers is a key natural and spatial landmark of Škofja Loka, located at the heart of the town. It represents an area of high environmental and landscape value, strong symbolic identity, and significant potential for public use. With appropriate protection and sustainable development, the confluence can serve as an important green, recreational, and social space, strengthening the town's relationship with water and nature.

where: Studenec 9, 4220 Škofja Loka



5

Puštal Bathing Area

The Puštal Bathing Area is a natural river bathing site located along the Poljane Sora River in Škofja Loka. It is characterised by very good ecological water status and represents an important recreational and social space for local residents. Due to its proximity to the historic town centre and surrounding green areas, the site has strong potential for further sustainable development, improved public accessibility, and enhanced integration into the wider network of riverside recreational areas, while maintaining high environmental standards.

where: Puštal 60, 4220 Škofja Loka



Groups

① **LTH and the Selca Sora River**

Supervisors: Daniele Ronsivalle & Maddalena Ferretti

② **Selca Sora Gorge and Bridges**

Supervisors: Sean Thomas Tyler, Matevž Juvančič & Benedetta Di Leo

③ **The Slaughterhouse by the Sora River**

Supervisors: Barbara Lino, Maros Krivy & Nina Povše

④ **Confluence of the Selca and Poljane Sora Rivers**

Supervisors: Jörg Schröder & Maurizio Carta

⑤ **Puštal Bathing Area**

Supervisors: Federica Scaffidi & Maros Krivy

