



©SECO / Construction of water infrastructure in Gorski Kotar

### Protecting the Environment

## Improving Water and Wastewater Infrastructure in the region of Gorski Kotar in Croatia

**Switzerland helped the region of Gorski Kotar in Croatia improve its water and wastewater infrastructure to provide access to drinking water to a larger number of citizens and to protect groundwater resources.**

Many regions in Croatia have a dilapidated drinking water supply infrastructure with a high rate of water loss. In addition, there is a substantial backlog for the construction of functioning systems for the treatment of domestic wastewater. Many residents used to collect their wastewater in septic tanks. The tanks, which are dug straight in the ground with or without concrete walls, pose an environmental risk, even if they are regularly emptied. Therefore, the installation of a wastewater collection system reduces ecological vulnerabilities to groundwater resources.

Gorski Kotar, a sparsely populated and mountainous region in the Northwest of the country, is one of those regions of Croatia where infrastructure is still poor. In the framework of its contribution to the enlarged EU, Switzerland assisted the three municipalities of Delnice, Fužine and Brod Moravice in the construction and rehabilitation of water and wastewater infrastructure.

With regards to drinking water, 60 km of water supply pipelines were laid, and 812 house connections to the water supply system were made. Furthermore, 25 water tanks were rehabilitated, and a modern pipeline surveillance system was installed. For wastewater, a total of 35 km of sewer pipes were laid and 1.240 house connections to the sewer system were made, and 28 pump stations were rehabilitated in the three municipalities. In Fužine and Brod Moravice, Switzerland provided funding for the construction of those two municipalities' first wastewater treatment plants, thereby significantly contributing to the protection of the groundwater resources in this area.