

Žirovnica Sustainability Report 2023

In 2023, Žirovnica continued its path of sustainable development, founded on a commitment to responsible management of space, cultural heritage, and tourism flows. At the very beginning of the year, we were awarded the prestigious **Slovenia Green Destination Silver Label**, which represents an important recognition of our efforts and, at the same time, a commitment to consistently embed sustainability principles into the everyday operations of the municipality, the Žirovnica Institute for Tourism and Culture, and all local partners. The label is the result of systematic management, the thoughtful development of the tourism offer, and the active involvement of the local community in shaping and preserving the authentic identity of Žirovnica.

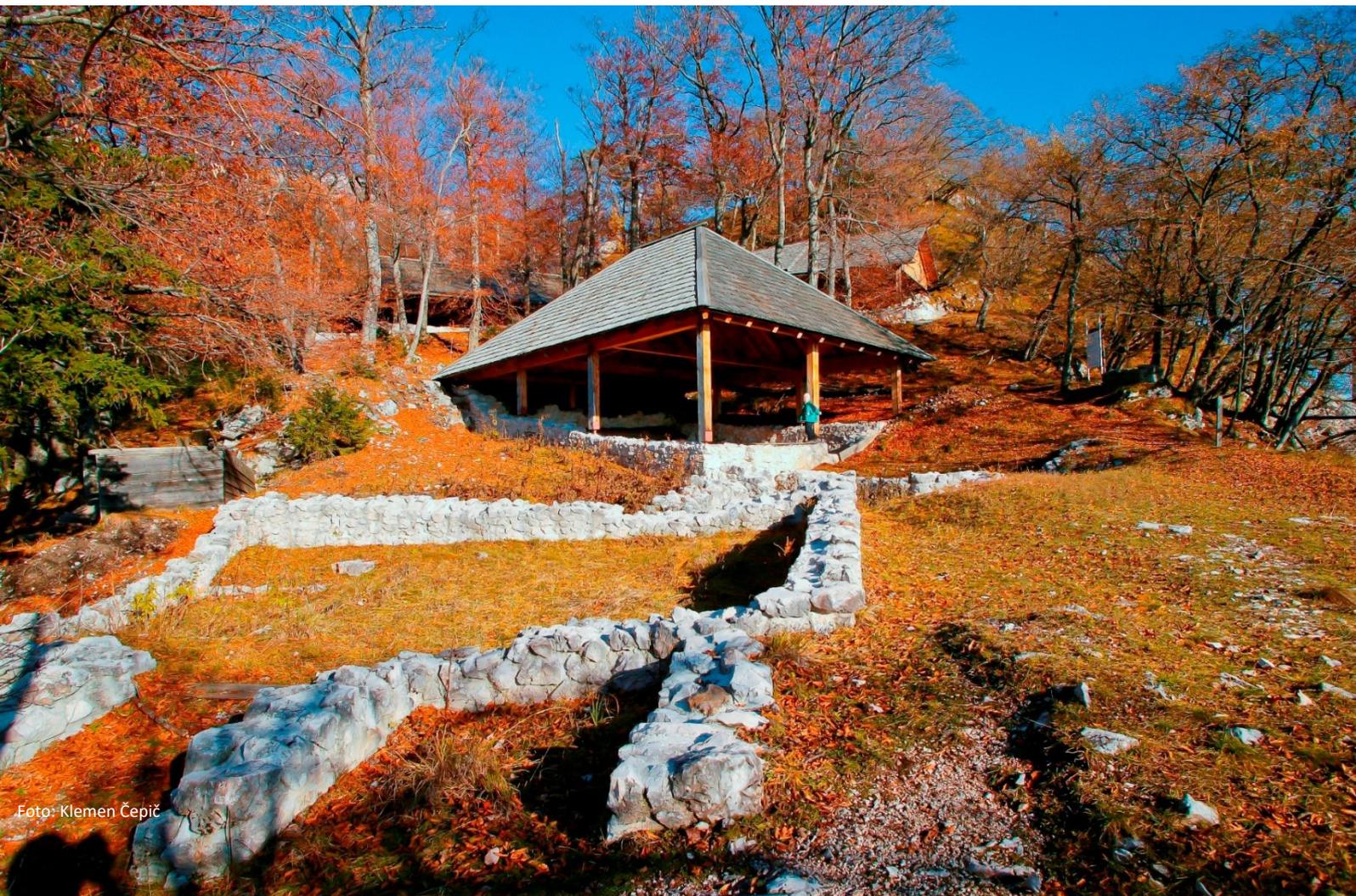


Foto: Klemen Čepić

Development Vision and Aims

Our heritage is our pride! We are aware of the natural and cultural heritage of the Žirovnica area and are proud of it. We strive to nurture, preserve and promote it, and also to warmly welcome all visitors who wish to discover the area's natural and cultural beauties. In accordance with the vision, which emphasises the prudent preservation of cultural and natural heritage, as well as the goals that strive for the sustainable development of key destination advantages, cultural content and natural attractions, the direction of further development of the destination of Žirovnica focuses on three fundamental areas:

- sustainable and responsible tourism
- cultural tourism
- active tourism

Measures introduced in 2023 that adhere to the Zirovnica sustainable development guidelines

As part of the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan, most of the measures planned in 2023 were introduced. Special emphasis was placed on strengthening the education of the green team, upgrading tourism infrastructure, and organising space in a way that reduces the burden on the environment and improves the quality of life for residents.

New information boards were installed in Završnica, Vrba and next to museum houses, points on the Cultural Heritage Trail were renovated, new shelters were installed at bus stops as well as additional bicycle racks. Guidelines for appropriate visitor behaviour were put together and are included in printed and digital communication, thereby striving to encourage visitors to be more aware of the space and heritage they visit.

Taking care of cultural heritage remains an important part of sustainable operation. In 2023, activities continued within the Living Heritage project, as part of which four selected points of the Cultural Heritage Trail were improved by installing street equipment, information boards and planting indigenous trees. In addition, the interpretive content was updated: 3D virtual presentations of Prešeren's and Finžgar's birth houses and translations of exhibitions in museum houses. These new features thus bring the content closer to a wider circle of visitors, enabling a more in-depth understanding of the cultural environment in which we live.

The Žirovnica Institute of Tourism and Culture (hereinafter: the Institute) is the manager of three monuments of national importance – Prešeren's and Finžgar's birth houses and the village linden tree in Vrba, as well as two monuments of local importance – Čop's birth house and Janša's apiary. It is also the manager of the Žirovnica Cultural Heritage Trail.

As part of the Institute's management, it is responsible for the promotion of monuments, maintenance of trails and monuments, guiding visitors and raising awareness among the public about the

importance of cultural heritage. The Institute is also responsible for the management of investments in maintenance of monuments, which in 2023 included:

- Preparation of a comprehensive project to landscape the surroundings of the village linden tree in Vrba and rehabilitation of the linden tree.
- Preparation of a project (in cooperation with the Municipality of Žirovnica) for the landscaping of the Doslovče entry point. The Institute participated in the tourist part of the project.
- Preparation of a conceptual design for renovation of the barn at Finžgar's birth house with the aim of making it suitable for holding workshops in winter.

The Institute also organised a meeting of museum house managers in Čop's birth house. The aim of the meeting was to connect, socialise, exchange ideas and experience, and reflect on future joint projects. Participants also had the opportunity to listen to a talk on the topic of conservation in museum houses.

The largest events in 2023 were based on the principles of sustainability and respect for the local community. At the traditional Hike along the Cultural Heritage Trail, visitors were encouraged to reduce waste; one such measure to encourage this was free tea for those who brought their own flasks. Visitors were also encouraged to visit by train through a joint campaign with Slovenian Railways. The Institute cooperates with local providers at the events and all events take place without single-use plastic.

An important part of sustainable operations is connecting with tourism providers, with whom several meetings, training sessions and presentations of good practice in 2023 were held, including in the areas of climate change and sustainable mobility. The Institute promotes local providers and products and sells their products in the Žirovnica online store and in Čop's birth house. The Institute collaborates with local catering service providers and promotes them at various events it organises.

Employees gained additional knowledge in various areas of sustainable operations through training and study tours within the Slovenia Green Consortium, of which Žirovnica is a member. The Institute participated in workshops within the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve and various international conferences, including the ICOM DEMHIST 2023 conference.

In cooperation with local associations, the Institute ensures the regular maintenance of hiking and mountain biking trails, and also landscaped the trail from the water surge tank to the Završnica Valley.

In 2023, Žirovnica will remain a destination that values its heritage, natural resources and local community. Sustainable operations are reflected in numerous daily processes, infrastructure renovations, thoughtful management of cultural facilities and the fact that events attract visitors while at the same time nurturing the identity of the area. The Slovenia Green Destination Silver Label is not only a recognition, but also a commitment to continue to carefully implement the principles of responsible tourism and, with the cooperation of all stakeholders, build Žirovnica as a green, hospitable and inspiring destination.

Informing the public about sustainable operations:

- Announcement about the Slovenia Green Destination Silver Label (Facebook, 17.2.2023)
- Žirovnica a recipient of the Slovenia Green Destination Silver Label (Municipality of Žirovnica News, 13.4.2023)

- (rtvslo.si, 30. 5. 2023)
- [Awarding of 69 new Slovenia Green Labels](#) (Radio Slovenija 1, 30.5.2023)
- [Traditional Green Day of Slovenian Tourism](#) (Radio Triglav, 31.5.2023)
- [Destination of Žirovnica has entered the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism](#) (Radio Triglav, 9.6.2023)
- Landscaping the Završnica Valley and traffic regime in the valley (Municipality of Žirovnica News, June 2023)
- Upgrade and renovation of the Žirovnica Cultural Heritage Trail (Novice Občine Žirov Municipality of Žirovnica News, June 2023)
- A Land of Good Stories – newspaper for visitors (Municipality of Žirovnica News, julij 2023)
- Tourism in the time of climate change (Times.si, 26.10.2023)
- Visitor numbers increase in Žirovnica (Municipality of Žirovnica News, November 2023)
- Tourism and the environment (Municipality of Žirovnica News, November 2023)
- Kašar Tribune of Ideas (*Pišemo vam* newsletter, November 2023)