

ŽIROVNICA

# Žirovnica Sustainability Report

2025





*“You are a guest on this planet, and, as such, are expected to leave it as you found it, or better.”*  
(Marlo Morgan)

As the proud holder of a Slovenia Green Destination Silver Label, the Žirovnica Institute for Tourism and Culture (hereinafter: the Institute) maintains and upgrades its commitment to sustainable development of the destination.

The year 2025 in Žirovnica was marked by the continuation of the systematic development of the destination and the enhancement of existing management approaches. The renovation of Prešeren’s birth house required well-planned guidance for visitors and adaptation of programmes. In addition, the Institute strengthened project work, improved cooperation with local stakeholders, and continued to introduce measures in the areas of mobility, cultural heritage management and event organisation. Sustainable approaches are no longer a separate set of activities; they have become an integrated part of the daily operations of the Institute.





## Development Vision and Aims

Our heritage is our pride! The Institute understands the natural and cultural heritage of Žirovnica as the foundation of the local identity and a key advantage in development of the destination. In 2025, the direction of development of the destination focused on three fundamental areas:

- sustainable and responsible tourism,
- cultural tourism,
- active tourism.



### 1 Transparent heritage management and cooperation with the local community

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 beehive. In addition, the Institute is the manager of the Žirovnica Cultural Heritage Trail.

Through exhibitions (an exhibition on the renovation of Prešeren’s birth house), events (book presentations) and international cooperation (International House Museum Days), which complement the heritage on offer, we are strengthening the role of museum houses as living cultural spaces. At the same time, due to the temporary closure of Prešeren’s birth house, meaning visitors were unable to see the house in person, the Institute developed alternative (including digital) content. It participated in the working group of the Ministry of Culture for the preparation of the Management Plan for Prešeren’s birthplace, together with the Institute and the Gorenjska Museum. The public was informed about progress of the renovation and the future management model, thereby strengthening the understanding of the importance of protecting cultural heritage. The traditional Hike Along the Žirovnica Cultural Heritage Trail also connected local associations, providers, residents and visitors in 2025. The Institute promotes local providers and local products and sells their products in the Žirovnica webstore.



## 2 Sustainable mobility and management of the natural environment

Visitors were encouraged to travel by train to major events (Hike Along the Žirovnica Cultural Heritage Trail, KašArt Festival). Slovenian Railways introduced additional stops on the day of the hike. Transport from Zirovnica railway station was arranged for the concert in Završnica, thus reducing individual arrivals by private vehicle. Traffic restrictions in the Završnica Valley and the system of car park management and picnic area reservations in the Završnica Recreational Park remain in force. In cooperation with local associations, the Institute ensures regular maintenance of hiking and mountain biking trails, and also worked on the trail from the water surge tank to the Završnica Valley. The Institute actively encourages visitors and the local population to use sustainable forms of mobility, such as cycling and walking.



## 3 Sustainable organisation of events

All major events in 2025 (KašArt Festival, Prešeren's Night, concert in Završnica, Mala scena events, Hike along the Žirovnica Cultural Heritage Trail) were organised taking into account the following principles: cooperation with local food and service providers, use of reusable cups and reduction of single-use plastics, raising visitor awareness about responsible behaviour in the natural environment, encouraging walking between individual venues (Žirovnica Cultural Heritage Trail).





## 4 Education and strengthening of competences

Employees working in tourism are almost always the first to come into contact with visitors and thus have a strong influence on their well-being in the destination. They influence how visitors will experience and accept the wealth of cultural heritage, beekeeping tradition, beautiful nature, local food and products.

Employees and external collaborators follow the Code of Ethics for Tourist Guides in the Destination of Žirovnica, and their knowledge is upgraded every year by attending various training courses. In 2025, training course attendees saw examples of good practice in Varaždin and in the Kajžnk House in Rateče, where they learned about the management and interpretation of ethnological heritage in the museum house. Employees enhanced their knowledge in the fields of sustainable destination management, interpretation of cultural heritage and the use of modern digital tools by attending workshops and training courses within the Julian Alps Community and the Slovenia Green Consortium. The Institute invited tourism providers in Žirovnica to an annual meeting, where they were acquainted with the latest news and developments for visitors to Žirovnica. The meeting was followed by an expert talk on the use of reservation platforms such as Booking.com and other accommodation booking systems. The aim of the talk was to improve tourists' user experience, enable more efficient management of reservations, and raise the quality of accommodation in the destination.



## 5 Communication and public awareness of sustainability

The Institute regularly communicates content relating to sustainability through: local media, online channels, promotional materials, events and professional meetings, and participation in international initiatives.



## Conclusion

The year 2025 was marked by a period of adaptation, consolidation of achieved results and establishment of additional foundations for future development of the destination. By consistently monitoring indicators, enhancing management approaches and connecting key stakeholders, the Institute strengthened the resilience and quality of tourism products and services.

Special emphasis was placed on effective visitor management and the dispersion of visitors within the destination. In addition, employee competencies were strengthened and innovative approaches in the interpretation of cultural heritage were encouraged.

**In future, the Institute's aims remain clear: upgrading sustainable practices, measurably improving environmental and social impacts, and maintaining a long-term balance between the development of tourism and the quality of life of the local community. The Institute will continue to develop Žirovnica as a thoughtfully managed destination, based on knowledge, cooperation and a responsible attitude towards space.**

