

## Sustainability Report Žirovnica 2022

Žirovnica has joined those destinations that assess their sustainable operations in the field of tourism using the international tool **Green Destinations Standard**, which will enable us both national and international comparability and visibility. In our endeavours to achieve the **Slovenia Green** label, which are expected to take until the end of this year, we will use various activities to collect data on the sustainability of tourism development in the destination and make the local population, economy, visitors and other stakeholders aware of the importance of sustainable tourism.



Photo: Klemen Čepić

We are proud of our heritage! 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 warmly welcome all visitors who have a desire to see and experience our natural and cultural attractions. In accordance with the vision highlighting the prudent preservation of cultural and natural heritage, together with the goals oriented towards the sustainable development of the key advantages of the destination's cultural content and natural attractions, the further development of the destination of Žirovnica focuses on three fundamental areas:

- sustainable/responsible tourism
- cultural tourism
- active tourism

## Measures implemented in 2022 that follow the guidelines of the sustainable development of Žirovnica

Those working in tourism are almost always the first contact that visitors have, thus they can have a significant influence on the well-being of visitors to the destination. Employees working in tourism can influence how visitors experience and accept the wealth of cultural heritage, tradition of beekeeping, beautiful nature, local food and products. Hence we put together a document titled **The Code of Ethics for Tourist Guides in the Destination of Žirovnica**, which adheres to European standards, legislation of the Republic of Slovenia, the national code for tourist guides and trends in the field of sustainable tourism. However, it has been prepared in the spirit of maintaining our local tradition and cultural heritage.

Žirovnica is part of the Julian Alps Community, within which meetings take place between **information providers and other employees of the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve**. At one of the meetings, the attendees were acquainted with the Biosphere Reserve of the Julian Alps and the Triglav National Park Quality Mark, the Juliana Trail, Juliana Bike and Juliana Ski Tour products, as well as sustainable mobility in the Julian Alps.

**Events** are an important factor, because they enable the destination to showcase, preserve and promote its wealth of cultural heritage. We work with local providers at the events and they all take place without single-use plastic products. The intertwining of green energy and culture is showcased through the following events:

- KašArt Festival – Prešeren's Night with Aleksander Mežek and friends in front of Prešeren's birth house
- KašArt Festival – Fairytale evenings in front of Finžgar's birth house
- KašArt Festival – Concert in Završnica
- Traditional hike along the Žirovnica Path of Cultural Heritage
- Other smaller events

A **car park in Rodine** with 27 parking spaces was constructed as part of our sustainable endeavours. The car park is equipped with an irrigation system that will ensure the grass and the newly planted *tepka* (a special variety of pear) and apple trees in the car park are kept regularly watered. Additional parking spaces have been provided in the Završnica valley and, during the high season, traffic restrictions have been introduced in the Završnica valley in the direction of the Valvasorjev dom mountain hut and the Dom pri izviru Završnice mountain hut.

The **Integrated Transport Strategy of the Municipality of Žirovnica** was adopted, which is a strategic document that aims to solve the municipality's challenges in the field of transport. The strategy will lead to an increase in traffic safety and improvements in the efficiency of public transport, while also encouraging people to walk and cycle, consequently reducing air pollution and improving the quality of life in the municipality.

A revision of the **Local Energy Plan** has begun, which is a key element of the long-term economic development of the municipality in general, and, above all, the basis for reducing energy dependence and environmental impacts. The document directs the municipality and its residents to reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions, improve the local air quality, and manage local renewable and non-renewable energy sources.

In 2022, the document **Catalogue of Žirovnica Street Equipment** was completed, which includes all street elements (benches, tables, rubbish bins, bike stands, bus stops, notice boards, etc.). The equipment is uniquely designed to fit into the village environment of Žirovnica. The basic materials are wood and metal, which are 'at home' in the wider area of the municipality of Žirovnica. In accordance with the catalogue, the following points were constructed/established in 2022: car park in Rodine, rest areas for walkers and cyclists along the Imperial Road, car park in Završnica, bus stop in Smokuč, etc.

From June to November, we carried out surveys to check how **satisfied local residents are with tourism in the destination**, as they are the main element of successful sustainable tourism.

We also checked how satisfied visitors are and asked for their opinions on tourism and the tourist facilities offered in Žirovnica. The survey also had an informatory function, as it allowed us to acquaint visitors with sustainable operations in the field of tourism. The visitor opinions can be read in the **Analysis of Surveys Among Residents of the Municipality of Žirovnica 2022**.



**93%**

of visitors are of the opinion that  
**it is safe to drink tap water.**



**75%**

of visitors are of the opinion that  
**the destination encourages visitors to use sustainable forms of transport.**



**78%**

of visitors are of the opinion that  
**there are enough bins for separating waste.**

Žirovnica has joined the **Green and Healthy Slovenia Friendly Office** initiative. In doing so, we have also started to act responsibly during work in offices in terms of reducing waste, measures to reduce energy use and water consumption, measures for new forms of transport to and between work, and ensuring health and safety in the workplace.

We held a **training session on sustainable tourism for tourism providers in Žirovnica**. We were interested in why sustainability is the only way to develop today, how to become a tourist

provider who rationally uses water and energy, how to properly handle waste and stop using single-use plastics.

As part of the meeting, the mayor of the municipality of Žirovnica, Leopold Pogačar, and the director of the Žirovnica Institute for Tourism and Culture, Matjaž Koman, signed the **Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism**, through which ten sustainable principles will be adopted in the municipality of Žirovnica as well as committing to sustainable operation and constant endeavours to improve.

**We promote local providers and local products** and sell their products in the Žirovnica online store. We collaborated with local catering service providers and promoted them at events of the KašArt Festival (Restavracija Manu and the Carniola Brewery). We also implemented a digital media campaign in order to promote the providers and the destination.

Together with Slovenian Railways, every year we invite visitors to **come by train** to major events in Žirovnica, such as the traditional Hike along the Žirovnica Path of Cultural Heritage on 8th February and the summer KašArt Festival.

In 2022, we submitted an application for the **Gorenjska na kolesu** (Gorenjska On a Bike) tender, which is put together by the BSC Kranj business support centre. If successful, it would result in two outdoor bike sheds being constructed in Žirovnica with twenty bikes (10 electric and 10 manual) as well as inclusion in the Gorenjska.bike bike hire network, which currently includes the following municipalities: Kranj, Radovljica, Jesenice, Tržič, Naklo, Škofja Loka, etc.

The Žirovnica Institute for Tourism and Culture 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.

Management includes, but is not limited to, the promotion of monuments, maintenance of paths and monuments, directing visitors and making the public aware of the importance of cultural heritage. As part of management, we also ensure investment takes place in the maintenance of monuments, which in 2022 included:

- Replacing the fence at Finžgar's birth house
- Repair of the bench in Finžgar's birth house
- Restoration of museum objects in Finžgar's birth house due to woodworm
- Preparation of a document on the upgrade and revitalisation of the Žirovnica Path of Cultural Heritage
- Professional arborist care of the linden trees in Vrba and Žirovnica
- Planting of five linden tree saplings in Vrba and Zabreznica
- As the manager, in 2022 the Žirovnica Institute for Tourism and Culture was a member of the working group established by the Ministry of Culture for the preparation of new content in the buildings at Prešeren's birth house and its renovation, as well as the preparation of content for the new museum exhibition about Prešeren. In 2022, we attended more than 15 meetings and workshops as part of the working group.

### **Informing the public about sustainable tourism:**

- Entry into the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism (Radio Triglav, 29/07/2022)

- Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism in the Municipality of Žirovnica (Radio Triglav, 27/07/2022)
- Žirovnica develops green tourism (Radio 1, 26/06/2022)
- The municipality of Žirovnica recently signed the Green Scheme of Slovenian tourism (Radio Triglav, 25/07/2022)
- Survey on tourism in Žirovnica (Gorenjski Glas, 15/7/2022)
- The municipality of Žirovnica has joined the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism (Radio Triglav, 31/5/2022)
- Meeting with tourism providers in the municipality (Radio Triglav, 20/5/2022)
- The municipality has enlarged the car park in the Završnica valley (Radio Triglav, 20/5/2022)
- Invitation to a meeting of tourism providers and education on sustainable tourism, Facebook, 12/5/2022)
- Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism signed in Žirovnica (Municipality of Žirovnica News, May 2022)

We also **monitor various indicators in the destination**, which we use to better understand the impact of tourism in various areas.

#### Tourist arrivals and growth

**7,308**

TOTAL +28%

**2.950**

DOMESTIC VISITORS -4%

**4.358**

FOREIGN VISITORS +65%

#### Number of overnight tourist stays and growth

**17,781**

TOTAL +45%

**6.534**

DOMESTIC VISITORS +15%

**11.247**

FOREIGN VISITORS +72%

#### Average length of stay

**2.43**

TOTAL

**2,21**

DOMESTIC VISITORS

**4,58**

FOREIGN VISITORS

#### Number of visitors to museum houses

**13.781**

TOTAL -25%

#### Sewage treatment to the second stage

**96,49%**

#### amount of separated waste collected

**50,62%**