



SUSTAINABILITY REPORT FOR THE DESTINATION VELENJE 2024

In Velenje, we are opening our hearts to green habits and stepping onto the path of sustainable development for a better future. As a proud recipient of prestigious sustainability certifications, including the Slovenia Green Destination GOLD, the European Green Leaf, and recognition as one of the 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, Velenje is solidifying its role as a model destination for sustainable tourism.

The year 2024 marked successful sustainable development, recognized internationally. Through numerous projects, we have taken significant steps toward a green future and promoted sustainable practices through various activities.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2024

Tourism and Sustainable Practices

- ✓ Increase in the number of arrivals and overnight stays compared to 2023.
- ✓ Gold Medal from Entente Florale 2024 for sustainable tourism and leisure.
- ✓ Introduction of returnable cups at public events.
- ✓ Planting of over 200 new trees to improve the urban environment.

Sustainable Mobility

- ✓ Opening of the new Štekna cycling path connecting Velenje with Koroška.
- ✓ Vista Mobility Plan for comprehensive sustainable mobility.
- ✓ Sustainable transportation: Bicikel Bus, Štekna Bus, Lokalci, and the city's BICY bike-sharing system.

Infrastructure and Circular Economy

- ✓ Establishment of the "Library of Things" Nucarnica at the Reuse Centre.
- ✓ Tree management plan for a green and tidy city.
- ✓ Climate and energy office as a support point for green transformation projects.
- ✓ Start of construction of sustainable and accessible tourist infrastructure by Velenje Lake.

GREEN AWARENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES

Awareness and Events

- 🕒 796 hours of sustainability awareness through the Green Informer.
- 💎 3 certified sustainable events (two Promenades of Flavors and the Pikin Festival).
- 🌱 Organization of a preserves exchange and promotion of green habits at the city market.

Environmental Certifications and Awards

Destination and Tourism

- ★ European Green Leaf.
- ★ 100 Climate-Neutral Cities.
- ★ Golden Certificate Zlati kamen 2024.
- ★ Gold Medal Entente Florale 2024.
- ★ My Country, Beautiful and Hospitable: Velenje – 2nd place in the Recognized Tourist Destination category and gold award for the historical centre of Staro Velenje.

Recognized Sustainable Stories

- 🏡 "The Secrets of the Sunken Villages" – among the top 6 best sustainable stories in the world (ITB Berlin).
- 🏡 "The Secrets of the Sunken Villages" – 2nd place for the digitalization of cultural tourism (ECTN AWARDS 2024).
- 🏡 "Underground Adventure in Huda Luknja" – Hidden Gems of Slovenia Award 2024.
- 🏡 Finalist for BEST OF AWARDS (The Slovenia) in the category of Most Popular Destination "Hidden Gem".

Community and Social Inclusion

- 🚲 "Co-Create Velenje" – an interactive portal for citizens' initiatives.
- 🌱 The Green Informer – an advanced intergenerational awareness system for sustainability topics.

Visitor Satisfaction

- 👍 88% of visitors are satisfied with the tourist offer.
- 👁️ 96% of visitors had their expectations met (63%) or exceeded (33%).
- 👏 Highest satisfaction: cleanliness of the surroundings, cycling opportunities, and safety.
- ⚠️ Main challenges: lack of culinary offerings after 10 p.m. and limited shopping options.

WE ARE PROUD OF

- 🏆 The winning team of the "More Knowledge for More Tourism" project – the product "Sweet Stories of the Šaleška Valley".
- 🏆 Beekeeping Čanč – gold medal for sparkling mead and silver for chestnut honey (AGRA 2024).
- 🏆 Marija Brložnik, President of the Velenje Tourist Association, who received the highest tourism recognition for mentoring young people.
- 🏆 Certified accommodation: Hostel Velenje with the Slovenia Green environmental certificate.

CLOSING THOUGHT

Velenje follows the vision of being a green, sustainable, and smart destination, setting standards for the future. Our mission is a clear commitment to nature conservation, improving the quality of life, and innovative sustainable tourism. Together, we are building a green future!

January 2025