

ALPINE AIR – CITY FLAIR IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT OF THE CITY OF KRANJ FOR THE YEARS 2023 AND 2024

In the heart of the Gorenjska region, we are not only shaping the present, but also forging the future. As the largest municipality in the region, we are keenly aware of our responsibility that extends beyond our borders – to help shape the green economy, support fertile agriculture and protect our extraordinary natural and cultural heritage for all those who come after us.



We are proud that our long-standing joint efforts have borne the finest fruit in 2023: the prestigious Slovenia Green Destination Platinum label. This is not only a recognition, but also a confirmation of our vision and commitment, that we are realising through a strong partnership between institutions, business and civil society.

But our journey does not end here. We are looking boldly ahead. We want not only to preserve what we have achieved, but also to be an inspiration and a role model for sustainable development in the region – proof that progress and care for the environment can go hand in hand.

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

Sustainable mobility is the smart way to get around today and tomorrow. It represents the transition from cars to healthier and more efficient modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. It represents the transition from cars to healthier and more efficient modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. It is a form of mobility that is accessible to all and improves quality of life.

Promoting it directly improves life in our communities, reduces environmental impact and aligns travel behaviour with a greener future.

Mobility extends beyond the boundaries of a single community, so our solutions are also designed to be far-reaching. By working with neighbouring communities, we are actively creating a comprehensive network for sustainable mobility that benefits all residents of the region.

CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

We wish to reduce the number of cars in Kranj, which is why the Centre for Sustainable Mobility is located in the Planina neighbourhood. It provides bicycle parking spaces and a bicycle repair shop and it is here where both residents and visitors can obtain all the information they need about KRskOLESOM, bus and train connections and other sustainable means of transport (Avant2go). In addition to its green roof, the centre also features tactile markings for blind and visually impaired people. The immediate surroundings of the building are well maintained and equipped to the latest standards to ensure a better quality of life with a focus on reducing noise and CO₂ emissions.

KRskOLESOM

This largest electrified bicycle rental system in the country is all about implementing our commitment to sustainable mobility with 31 stations in Kranj and the surrounding area, where over 163 regular bicycles and 48

electric bicycles can be rented. It is part of the Gorenjska.bike network, which connects the city of Kranj with the municipalities of Jesenice, Naklo, Radovljica, Tržič, Škofja Loka, Cerklje na Gorenjskem, Preddvor, Domžale and Bled (10 municipalities in total).

KRANVAJ

The municipality of Kranj offers residents of the city centre and visitors to the city a free transport service called Kranvaj. The mini electric bus can accommodate five passengers and luggage. It is also possible to load a wheelchair or pram with a width of up to 65 cm into the vehicle. This transport can be booked as follows:

- Passengers wait at the marked boarding points (Kranj Library, Pungert, Huje) to board.
- One can stop the bus in the old town area by waving at it or showing another hand signal or
- It is possible to order or book the transport in advance by calling the publicly available mobile phone number (031 383 700). Reservations are taken by the driver in person or by telephone daily between 8 a.m. and 7.30 p.m.

CAR SHARING

The municipality of Kranj has signed a contract with the company Avant2Go for the provision of electric cars for sharing. The project provides for 14 parking spaces for electric vehicles at 4 locations (municipality of Kranj, IskrateL-Labore, Čebelica, Centre for Sustainable Mobility). The aim of the project is to promote car sharing, reduce emissions and cut noise levels in city centres. Avant2Go vehicles are 100% electric and easy to use. A vehicle can be parked/picked up at many other locations that Kranj is now connected to – Bled, Jože Pučnik Airport, Ljubljana, Koper and Maribor.

A COMMUNITY TAILORED TO EVERYONE

The city of Kranj is aware of the difficulties faced by people with special needs. To this end, it has joined the "Tailor-made municipality for people with disabilities" project and assumed responsibility for its continuous implementation. Every year, activities are carried out in all areas of accessibility. The Kranj Tourism and Culture Board has conducted a study in around 100 buildings, assessing their accessibility for people with physical disabilities, for blind and visually impaired people, as well as deaf people and people who are hard of hearing. The report on this study is available on the visit-kranj.com website.

GREEN PROJECTS

Green projects are like mosaic tiles that make up the overall picture of our endeavours towards the protection of nature. Below, we present some of them, covering various areas of sustainability, combining different topics and environments and improving quality of life. Kranj as a tourist destination has been awarded the Platinum

Label as a "Slovenia Green Destination" and the title of the European Destination of Excellence (EDEN) in 2023, confirming that we are well on our way to achieving the most sustainable form of tourism management and development possible.

GORENJSKA IN ACTION TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE

Awareness of the need for sustainable or green development is growing in Slovenia. Climate change has become part of our reality and it presents us with major challenges. For this reason, the municipality of Kranj has participated in the creation of a sustainable energy and climate plan within the framework of the Gorenjska Regional Council, making Gorenjska the first Slovenian region to have its own sustainable energy and climate plan.

SMART CITIES WITH JOINT FORCES

Ljubljana, Kranj and Velenje were selected to participate in the "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities" mission. In November, the municipalities signed a commitment to establish their Slovenian partnership, as they are aware of the importance of cooperation and co-creation in achieving this common goal. The European Commission will accompany, support and advise the selected cities on their way to achieving their goal, as their purpose of this is to accelerate progress on the task at hand.

GREEN ROOF

The biggest advantage of green roofs is water retention, as such a roof can retain 80% of precipitation, ensuring that the sewer system is not overloaded during heavy rainfall. The first roof of this type in Kranj was installed at the Stane Žagar Primary School. For four years, the seventh-graders have been diligently caring for it and using it as a teaching aid in natural history lessons.



GREEN EXPERIENCES

SLOVENIA GREEN GOURMET ROUTE

The Slovenia Green Gourmet gastronomic cycling route offers an unforgettable experience for all lovers of cycling and fine cuisine. The route crosses almost the whole of Slovenia, which was declared a European Gastronomic Region in 2021, and connects carefully selected green destinations that have the Slovenia Green label. The starting point for this varied culinary adventure, which focuses on sustainability, local flavours and a green future for tourism, is Ljubljana. From there, cyclists ride to three up-and-coming gastronomic gems: Škofja Loka, Kranj and Radovljica.



KRANJ FOTO FEST

The photography festival that has been held in Kranj since 2021 has the aim to make Kranj a centre for contemporary photography in this part of Europe. Kranj was not chosen as the venue for the festival by chance. Although the invention of photography is attributed to two people from France, at the same time Janez Puhar from Kranj laid the foundation for creating permanent photographs and, with his photographic achievement, the unique process of photography on glass, he put the then region of Carniola on the world map of the development of photography or light script, as he called it. The festival exhibits, promotes, supports and develops the work of Slovenian and international photographers. The Kranj Foto Fest 2024 was conceived without thematic restrictions, which motivated photographers of different profiles and backgrounds to present their work here.

HEADS OR TAILS

Let's turn traditional guided tours upside down. Why not let a coin decide the course of your tour of Kranj? We have put together a guided tour of Kranj in which a coin toss decides each of our next steps and a camera obscura turns things upside down even more. Tails means we turn left and heads means we turn right. This is how we walk to 14 points connected with Slovenia's greatest poet, France Prešeren.

DIGITAL WALK THROUGH THE TUNNELS

In Kranj, we are proud of our 6000-year history that has shaped the life of the city and its surroundings. Today, the city combines the charm of the Alpine landscape with



urban cultural programmes and its intellectual heritage, giving it a special appeal and making it unique and interesting for visitors. On this special tour, they can discover its hidden cultural heritage. In the tunnels beneath the old town of Kranj, they learn more about the important periods in Kranj's history with the help of digital technology and 15 information points. The tunnels are extremely interesting because a very special natural environment reminiscent of karst caves has formed in them.

NEW GREEN EXPERIENCES IN BRDO PARK

Brdo Park has many new features to offer, most of which have a distinctly green character. They include:

- Day of House-Made Delicacies – 40 local suppliers of traditional dishes
- Picnic in nature with a basket full of delicious food provided by local suppliers

ECO WEEK

With its various activities, this festival raises awareness of the need for environmental protection, responsible behaviour and the introduction of sustainable lifestyles into our everyday lives. Walks and excursions in nature, workshops for children and young people, films with discussions... With its rich programme, the festival invites all generations to actively participate in creating a more sustainable future.

SOS PROTEUS – THE INFORMATION CENTRE FOR CAVE SALAMANDERS

In 2023, the SOS Proteus Information Centre was selected as one of the 100 most sustainable stories in the world as part of the Green Destinations Top 100 Stories initiative, with its story "We share with the olms a need for clean and drinkable groundwater". The recognition for this extraordinary achievement went to the right people – biologist Gregor Aljančič and his institute, the Tular Cave Laboratory, which is behind the idea and development of the centre. Gregor Aljančič, founder of the Tular Cave Laboratory Institute, is the conceptual director, technical designer and operator of the SOS Proteus Information Centre, which is located in the tunnels beneath the old town of Kranj. The centre's mission is to raise awareness of the threats to cave salamanders and the importance of

protecting underground drinking water resources. Among other things, visitors can also see olms that were washed to the surface by the floods – without timely help, they would not have been able to survive there. The story that convinced the international commission draws attention to the fragility of biodiversity in caves and underlines the importance of preserving clean groundwater – an important source of drinking water for us all.



GASTRONOMY

LONG TABLE OF KRANJ

The Long Table of Kranj was first organised in 2021 and delighted its guests for the third time in a row in 2023. Also this year, we once again brought together local restaurants and their chefs – Gostilna Krištof – Uroš Gorjanc, Restaurant and Café Brioni – Tomaž Polenec, Pr' Končovc Holiday Farm – Aleš Kristan, as well as two Michelin-starred chefs from Kranj, namely from Restaurant Strelec – Igor Jagodic and from Obedovalnica Aftr and Breg Bistro – Jorg Zupan. Each of them prepared a dish that showcased their culinary skills. The teams from the restaurants Rekar and Lakner, the Sonet bistro and Dom na Joštu also helped with the catering and preparation for the event. The project was designed with sustainability in mind, without plastic, with minimal food waste, local supply chains and excellent tap water to drink. Every year, we measure the event's carbon footprint. Charity was also incorporated into the



concept of the event. The company Žito came to the aid of the Gorenjska social work centre in Kranj with a donation of various food items (pasta, cereal products and the like). This provided 70 individuals and families with around 10 hearty meals.

The organiser, the Tourist and Culture Board Kranj, thus succeeded in combining haute cuisine with responsibility towards the local community. The event was therefore not only a feast for the eyes and palate, but also an initiative that brought people together.

THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN KRANJ

Kranj's restaurants have been recommended by various international gastronomic guides. The Krištof restaurant in Predoslje received the Michelin Select recommendation from the Michelin Slovenia culinary guide and was awarded a green Michelin star for the fifth consecutive year. In the Gault & Millau Slovenija culinary guide, Gostilna Krištof was awarded 3 chef's hats, while the Brioni Restaurant and Café and Gostilna Pr' Matičku were awarded each 2 chef's hats. The following restaurants were also included in the POP category: Pr' Končovc, Dom na Joštu, Projekt Burger and Picerija Orli. The culinary magazine Falstaff awarded Gostilna Krištof three forks, two forks went to Gostilna Pr' Matičku and the Brioni Restaurant and Café, and one fork went to the Pr' Končovc holiday farm.

GREEN COMMUNICATION

The effectiveness of green projects is inextricably linked to active education and strategic communication. Our approach goes beyond purely technical implementation and focuses on the involvement of all stakeholders – both the local population and visitors. We are aware that the true value of sustainable measures lies not only in reducing environmental impact, but also in their acceptance in society and long-term change in habits. Therefore, each project is accompanied by targeted educational content that promotes understanding and responsibility for a shared, sustainable future.

SLOVENIA GREEN

In 2023 and 2024, tourism service providers in Kranj received the Green Key environmental/sustainability label and subsequently joined the Slovenia Green family. New additions include awards for the Brdo Estate and the Tunnels under the Old Town of Kranj, while the Pr' Končovc holiday farm renews its award every year.

Jenkos Residence has received the "Zero Waste Accommodation" label.

TRAINING

In the city of Kranj, great importance is attached to further training in the field of sustainability. This is carried out by various organisations in different areas. The Kranj Tourist Board offers new knowledge to stakeholders in

the tourism sector. The Kranj Centre for Sustainable Rural Development and BSC Kranj conduct training courses for professionals and the general public. The Kovačnica Business Incubator provides a supportive environment for dynamic entrepreneurship. The Brdo Estate has now also made a name for itself as a provider of training courses on excellence in hospitality for the entire Slovenian tourism industry.

The training courses covered the following topics:

- Trends, innovation, smart solutions, the use of generative artificial intelligence and sustainability in tourism
- Mitigation and adaptation to the consequences of climate change in communities
- Ecological agriculture and horticulture
- Potential of Slovenian wood
- Biodiversity in settlement areas
- School for butlers and service culture at state events
- Designing locations for environmentally friendly fishing tourism and presenting the cultural heritage of fishing.

OUR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MEASURES

The municipality of Kranj has demonstrated its social responsibility primarily through measures to strengthen the community and improve quality of life. By continuing the participatory budgeting project "Kr' predlagaj" (Just make a suggestion), it has enabled citizens to have a direct say in the use of public funds and, at the same time, it has supported the work of non-governmental organisations that care for the most vulnerable groups in society by co-financing social programmes. In addition to this, the municipality actively promoted sustainable mobility as part of European Mobility Week and contributed directly to greater safety for all residents through concrete investments in public safety, such as the installation of 13 new publicly accessible defibrillators.

The Tourism and Culture Board Kranj has expanded its social responsibility beyond its basic promotional tasks by actively contributing to the well-being of the local community. It has proven itself as co-organiser of the successful charity campaign "V Kranju dobro v srcu mislimo" (In Kranj, we think well in our hearts), which raised funds for socially disadvantaged people. By organising numerous free events and guided tours, it has made culture accessible to all residents, regardless of their social status. At the same time, it supported local artists through exhibitions at Kranjska hiša and at events. This also strengthened the local economy, and by raising visitors' awareness of the importance of sustainability and promoting green providers, the Board took responsibility for the long-term preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of Kranj and its surroundings.

FIRST INTERNATIONAL BWF CERTIFICATE FOR EXCELLENT QUALITY OF DRINKING WATER FROM THE PUBLIC FOUNTAIN IN THE CITY CENTRE

At the Bled Water Forum 2023, the municipality of Kranj, together with the Tourism and Culture Board Kranj and Komunala Kranj, received the first international BWF certificate for the excellent quality of drinking water from the public fountain in the city centre. The award confirms not only the exceptional quality of the water, but also the local community's responsible attitude towards the protection of natural resources.

Mayor Matjaž Rakovec emphasised when accepting the award that drinking tap water reduces plastic consumption and contributes to a cleaner environment. The Director of the Tourism and Culture Board, Klemen Malovrh, added that this award joins the other awards already received – European Destination of Excellence and Slovenia Green Destination Platinum – confirming that Kranj is successfully following the guidelines for sustainable development.

The history of Kranj's water is thus further proof that the city not only ensures the quality of life for its inhabitants but also actively contributes to raising awareness of the importance of drinking water and the sustainable use of natural resources.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

To effectively inform the public, we have a comprehensive multi-channel communication system. At the heart of our activities is a dynamic digital platform that includes a revamped website and an active presence on social networks such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, which allows us to successfully reach younger generations. We raise awareness of the destination through targeted communication in local, national and international media, as well as by organising study trips for journalists and partners. Our approach is based on data: through regular surveys and thorough analysis of the results we continuously optimise our activities. By strategically combining digital and traditional tools, we ensure that all key target groups – from the local population to visitors and economic stakeholders – are informed in a timely and appropriate manner.

As the largest municipality in the Gorenjska region, we are aware that our sustainability measures have an important impact on the entire region, from the economy and agriculture to the preservation of natural and cultural heritage. We achieve this through close cooperation between public institutions, the business community and non-governmental organisations in numerous cross-sectoral projects. Our goal is not only to preserve what we have achieved, but to become a leading example of sustainable urban development in the region, to prove that progress and environmental protection can go hand in hand.