



SUSTAINABLE REPORT OF DESTINATION KANAL OB SOČI



GREEN POLICIES OF THE KANAL OB SOČI MUNICIPALITY

The Municipality of Kanal ob Soči is located in the central Soča Valley and, thanks to its natural features, provides many opportunities for the development of cycling and hiking tourism. Visitors to our Municipality are delighted by the peaceful little corners and unspoilt nature they can enjoy in the valleys of the Soča River and the bordering Idrija River, or in the hills of the Kanalsko Kolovrat and Banjšice. The rich cultural heritage of the town is also worth a visit: the famous Canal Bridge, private museum collections, the Kontrada Square, the Riko Debenjak Gallery with the memorial room of the renowned painter and graphic artist, the Neptune Fountain and the rich sacral heritage.

In 2018, the Municipality of Kanal ob Soči joined the **Slovenian Green Tourism Scheme**. We have thereby committed ourselves to promoting sustainable action, bringing sustainability efforts together and promoting local character and green stories. As part of the process of obtaining the Slovenia Green Destination label, our Municipality signed the Slovenian Green Tourism Policy and committed to implementing activities that promote sustainability in all areas. We have been awarded the Green Destination Bronze label and our destination was assessed in five categories. We have been awarded the Green Destination Bronze label and our destination was assessed in five categories.



Kanalski vrh

1. THE FIRST GREEN KEY SUSTAINABILITY LABEL IN THE MUNICIPALITY

In 2021, the destination received its first Green Key sustainability label, awarded to the Vinazza pizzeria of Deskle. The Green Key is the leading standard of excellence for environmental responsibility and sustainability in the tourism industry. It ensures that companies comply with the strict criteria set by the International Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). By choosing a certified tourist establishment, its guests are directly helping to protect the environment. The pizzeria has also formally embedded its green policy and sustainability in its business operations. By obtaining this label - one of the internationally valid sustainability labels recognised in the Slovenian Tourism Act - and signing the Green Policy of Slovenian Tourism and the Commitment to Sustainable Gastronomy in Slovenia, the establishment has also fulfilled the conditions for obtaining the Slovenia Green Cuisine label, thus formally positioning itself as an environmentally and socially friendly restaurant on the Slovenian, European and global market.





2. TAKING CARE OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESTINATION

In developing sustainable tourism in the destination, we rely on:

- The Soča Valley Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy 2025+ , which is based on the development of four products - cycling, hiking, culture and events, and holidays in the countryside.
- Amendment of the Local Development Strategy of the Soča Valley Local Action Group.
- A municipal development strategy is under preparation and is expected to be finalised and presented in April 2022;
- As our destination will become a member of the Julian Alps Community in 2021, the development of the we also draw on the Development Plan for the Julian Alps Biosphere Area (BOJA) as a Sustainable Tourism Destination 2025+.

By cooperating with other destinations of the Soča Valley and the Julian Alps Community, our destination is gaining better promotion, visibility and cooperation, and at the same time, as a small destination, it is gaining new and rich experience. We will continue to work together in joint projects on product development in the coming years.

The Municipality of Kanal ob Soči successfully cooperates with the Soča Valley Institute. We are involved in all promotional activities of the Institute, we jointly design promotional materials, we are included in the Feratrel Reservation System, the Outdooractive Portal and the Soča Valley Destination Card.

3. GREEN PRODUCT OF THE DESTINATION - PARK PEČNO

Pečno Park is the site for the transformation of the forest into a testing ground for recreational, cultural and educational activities in nature. It is located 600 metres from the centre of Kanal, on the road to Ligo. It is located 600 metres from the centre of Kanal, on the road to Lig village. The park features a circular hiking trail with a viewpoint of Kanal, a mountain bike track and a *forma viva* (sculpture park). There is a picturesque forest trail along the torrent bed, which is a

link between the Pečno Park and the banks of the Soča River, and is suitable for both hikers and downhill cyclists. An archery shooting range has also been built recently on the trail. Several traditional events take place in the park: the MTB (mountain bike) meeting, Saint Gregory's Feast, exhibitions, cinema in the forest, concerts, etc.



As part of the Tangram Project, a vision for the management of natural heritage in the Goriška Region will be developed, with a specific vision for the Pečno Park. To this end, three interactive workshops were held in 2021. In February 2022, strategic guidelines were set for Pečno Park. The purpose of the park's activities is to promote the protection of the local environment, in particular the natural and cultural heritage of the area, as a key driver for promoting sustainable tourism



4. COMMUNITY NETWORKING AND PROMOTION

In the sustainable development of the Municipality, we work with the tourism sector - private and public - in different areas and in different ways (through briefings, meetings, events, the shaping of the Municipality's offer, projects, calls for proposals to co-finance the programmes of the Municipality's associations, discussions at municipal meetings when acts are adopted, and other documents, budgets and work programmes). We also raise awareness and motivate the tourism sector towards the development of sustainable business models.

Each year, the Municipality cooperates with various stakeholders: with professional institutions (health institutions, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Institute for Nature Conservation, DRSI for consents, Paths of Peace Foundation, Posočje Development Centre, Nova Gorica Regional Development Agency, etc.), in the field of projects we cooperate with other institutions and with many associations in the Municipality (e.g. we collaborate with the Soča Educational Association to promote the monthly exhibitions at the Riko Debenjak Gallery; with the Lig Carnival Association, we worked together to register the traditional masks of the Lig village in the Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage; with the Kal nad Kanalom Folklore Group, we worked together to prepare an initiative for the entry of the Kal Carnival in the Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage; and we work together with the local communities in the development of the Municipality's budget). We also work with individual citizens, listening to their wishes and trying to integrate them into our activities.

We regularly attend trade fairs to promote our destination. Our local offer is promoted on the TIC Kanal website (<https://www.tic-kanal.si/>), and we forward the information on major events to the Soča Valley and Julian Alps Institute to be presented through their channels. We also regularly promote TIC Kanal on our FB profile and on Instagram, where we post new offers in the Municipality. Our tourism offer is listed in our promotional material and included in our projects.

In 2021, we have produced two promotional films:

- The promotional film on the Kanal ob Soči Municipality

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QFm-nYTsX8>



- Fishing on the Soča River

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0sFMwb3W5pA>



5. COLLECTIVE BRAND OF THE SOČA VALLEY

The 'From the Soča Valley' Collective Brand (CB) links four geographical areas: the municipalities of Bovec, Kobarid, Tolmin and Kanal ob Soči, with the common aim of stimulating the growth in the quality of the overall offer, facilitating the networking of providers, and the development of new and related products and services. To this end, expert workshops and consultations have been organised, and the certification will establish a register of providers, increase the quality of the offer, short local supply chains and coordinated promotion and marketing of local providers. The first products have already been evaluated in 2021. The response from local providers was overwhelming, and seven providers from our Municipality joined the project (ceramists Alenka Gololičič and Ferdinand Žorža, hand-woven blanket maker Špela Gabrijelčič, Kanal cheese factory with its dairy products, Pr'Lukčevih farm with its cured meat products, and beekeepers Silvia Rozman Gerbec and Darja Žnidarčič), and were awarded the 'From the Soča Valley' Quality Certificate.



In the future, plans are underway to present all certified providers on a website and to establish a comprehensive marketing of the certified offer, which will be coordinated with the marketing of the destination as a whole. Workshops and advice sessions will also be organised for those wishing to join the CB scheme.

Dolina Soče



6. EVENTS AND TRAINING

In cooperation with the Soča Valley Institute, we invited our providers to a series of Tourism Up workshops and, together with the Julian Alps Community, we organised a workshop for tourism providers to present the Julian Alps Accommodation Finder and the Regiondo programme. As part of the Green Scheme, we organised on 17 January 2022 a consultation for tourism providers entitled 'Encouraging tourism providers to develop sustainable models - opportunities and challenges for sustainable tourism development in the destination Kanal ob Soči'.



Our destination tries to organise events as sustainably as possible. In the past year, the MTB Weekend event was a resounding success. It is a meeting of mountain bikers with guided tours of the nearby hills in the Municipality of Kanal ob Soči. Several hikes were also organised (the 'Where are Those Paths' hike in Levpa, the Prižnica Memorial Park hike, the Vodice hike and the hike along the Heathens' trails). The traditional Kerafest, events at Pečno Park (Saint Gregory's Fear, exhibitions, cinema in the forest), Chilifest and the Fishermen's Festival were also successfully held. This year, for the first time, we took part in the Olympic Torch event.



Every year, we host the Cycling Tour of Slovenia, which this year was held under the slogan Fight for Green. The main guideline for the race was to leave as little carbon footprint and environmentally friendly material as possible. This has shown the general public that it is possible to be environmentally responsible when organising events of this kind.



7. SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

The Municipality is implementing a number of measures to improve mobility at the destination. Together with the Posočje Development Centre, the Municipality of Kanal ob Soči is involved in the strategic project CROSSMOBY. The project will develop an integrated transport strategy for the wider area of the Julian Alps. The results of this project will provide the Municipality with a comprehensive overview of its infrastructure management and sustainable mobility system. A ring road project is being actively pursued to reduce traffic through the centre of Kanal. The Municipality is also very active in building new cycle paths. The Municipality is also very active in building new cycling lanes. Since 2021, the route of the Juliana bike circular touring bike trail (Tolmin - Kanalski kolovrat - Goriška brda) has been running through the Municipality of Kanal ob Soči. Each year, in cooperation with associations and other organisations, new hiking trails are created and existing ones are carefully maintained.

All cycling and hiking trails are described in more detail on the TIC Kanal website;

<https://www.tic-kanal.si/kolesarjenje/> and <https://www.tic-kanal.si/pohodnistvo/>.

From 2021, the Municipality will also offer bicycle and electric bicycle rental at the new Slovenia Nature Agency.



The Municipality is working to increase the use of public transport. To this end, we have joined the Bohinj Railway Consortium. The Consortium's main objective is to develop the Bohinj Railway towards an interregional and cross-border sustainable mobility link between the Julian Alps and the Adriatic. In this context, passenger infrastructure is also planned. Multi-modal passenger hubs are planned at key railway stations to allow easy interchanges between different mobility modes. In addition, the Bohinj Railway is also an outstanding tourist product and an excellent basis for tailoring services to different user groups (travellers, hikers, cyclists).



8. PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Our destination boasts an extremely rich immovable and intangible cultural heritage, both in the very centre of the Municipality, at Kanal, and in the surrounding areas.

In 2021, a number of activities were carried out in terms of preserving cultural heritage:

- the rehabilitation of the reservoir from the First World War II at Kambreško (project: Path of Peace, Interreg Slovenia Italy),
- the cleaning of the Kanal Bridge (symbol of the Municipality and the centre of Kanal),
- each year, the Municipality launches a call for tenders to co-finance cultural programmes of associations in the Municipality, and a call for tenders for the maintenance of religious buildings,
- the renovation of the parish hall at Lig,
- the renovation of the façade of the municipal building,
- the marking of the Kanal Cultural Trail with bronze floor markers (idea by the Kanal Ceramics Club),
- the proposal for the inscription of the restored chapel in Gorenjska vas in the Register of Cultural Heritage,
- the inscription of the carnival masks from Lig (village) in the Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage,
- the proposal for the inscription of the Kal Carnival in the Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage,
- the renovation of the façade of the Riko Debenjak Gallery at Kanal,
- the proposal for the restoration of the fence at 'Lourdes' - a natural cave with the statue of the Virgin Mary
- the proposal for the rehabilitation of the stone troughs along the Juliana Trail, which would be gradually restored by the Municipality,
- the preparation of the content and installation of the signboard for the Lukč House (housing the museum collection from the First World War, a hearth and an ethnological exhibition),
- the proposal for the rehabilitation of the monument from the First World War at Avče, submitted at the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage,
- The Walk of Peace - the renovation of the information panels along the trail,
- the proposals submitted by a citizen to upgrade the Riko Debenjak Gallery at Kanal (proposals will be resolved with the newly established Institute for Tourism, Culture, Sports and Youth)



In our activities, we work together with the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, which provides guidelines for interventions on cultural heritage. We also take into account our citizens' initiatives.



9. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

At the Kanal ob Soči Destination, we strive to be as socially responsible as possible and pay great attention to the care of our elderly citizens:

- V sodelovanju z Domom upokojencev Nova Gorica je od konca leta 2018 v Desklah vzpostavljen Dnevni in medgeneracijski center (dnevno varstvo za starejše in razbremenitev svojcev ter medgeneracijski center za medgeneracijsko druženje ter izvajanje delavnic in izobraževanj na področju zdravja in socialno humanitarnih dejavnosti).
- The Municipality organises transport for the elderly - Prostofer - and finances the rental of an electric car.
- The Municipality finances the services of the Golden Network Call Centre.
- A Local Health Promotion Group has been set up within the Municipality.
- The Municipality has a Self-Help Group (partly run by the Municipality, partly on a voluntary basis, led by a municipal employee). The aim of the Group is to help informal carers who are looking after a disabled relative. The Group identifies problems in its environment, which the Municipality then addresses with the relevant institutions.
- The Municipality actively participated in the first Conference for Informal Carers in the past and is also cooperating with the Anton Trstenjak Institute.

The Municipality recognises the importance of looking after the health of the whole population and therefore:

- is preparing a Mental Health Strategy and a Health Action Plan 2019-2021 in collaboration with the National Institute of Public Health (Local Health Promotion Group);
- has installed defibrillators (AEDs) in all local communities, and will finance the maintenance of these devices; several workshops on help with cardiac arrest have also been held;
- conducts promotions (DORA, ZORA, SVIT, cancer detection, dementia, cardiovascular diseases, etc.) in the form of workshops, lectures and public announcements in the electronic and other media;
- co-finances around 76 organisations in various fields, including Youth Programmes and Programmes for the Elderly.
- social and humanitarian organisations with their own programmes operate in the Municipality.



Kanal, February 2022

Text: Kanal Local Tourism Board, Municipality of Kanal ob Soči, Green Team of the Municipality of Kanal ob Soči

Photos: archives of the Kanal Local Tourism Board.