



SUSTAINABILITY R E P O R T 2 0 2 3 - 2 0 2 4



Steps along the Green route of Laško

The Laško destination has been committed to sustainable tourism development for almost a decade. In 2015, the destination officially embarked on the path of sustainable development by signing the Green Policy of Slovenian Tourism and became part of the Green Scheme of Slovenian tourism. Since then, Laško has consistently pursued its vision of sustainable tourism, as evidenced by numerous awards and achievements.

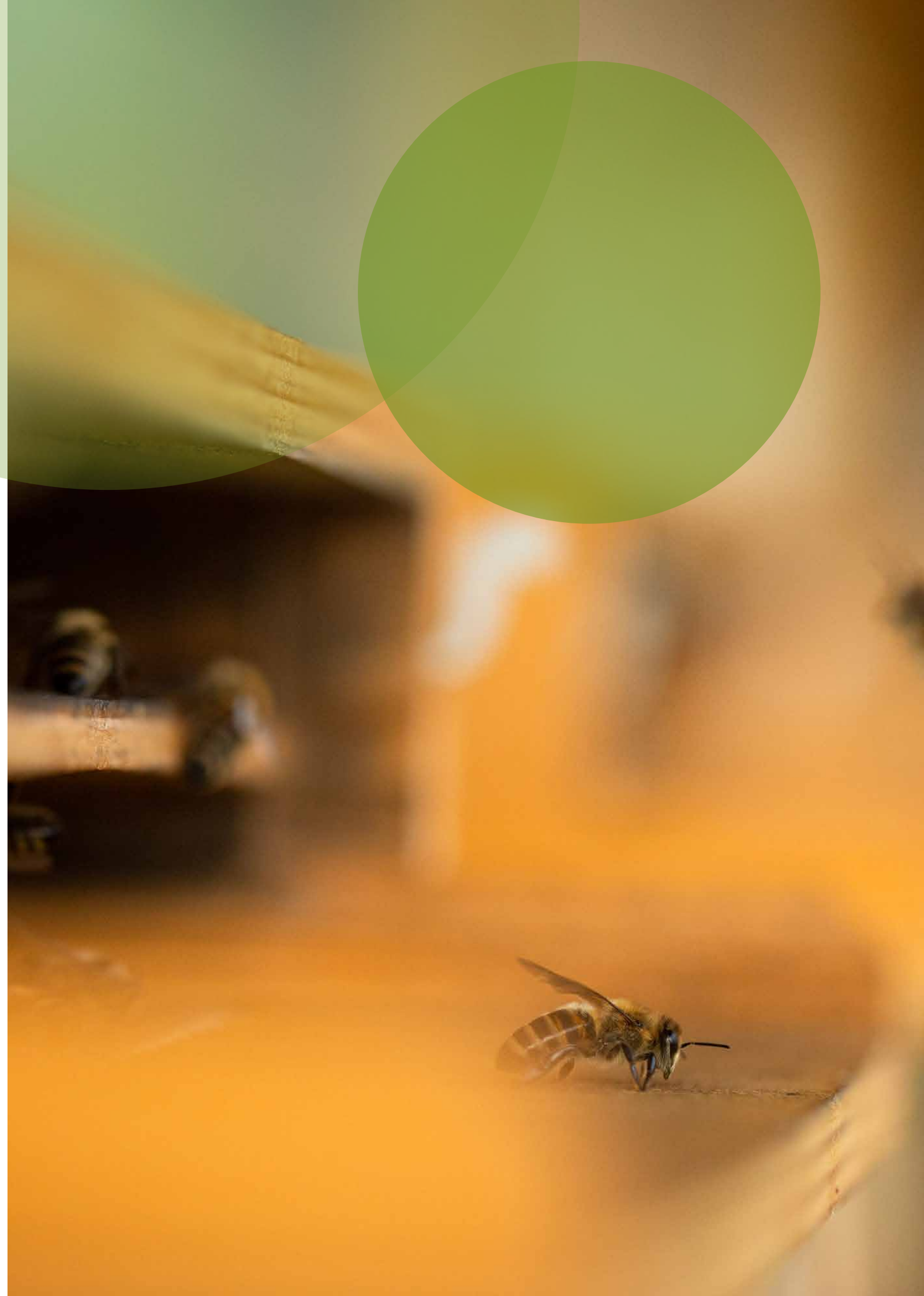
The first step towards realising these ambitions was taken in 2016, when the destination was awarded the Slovenia Green Destination BRONZE label. In 2019, Laško further improved its sustainability practices and progressed to the Slovenia Green Destination GOLD label. The biggest success so far came in 2022, when the destination was awarded the prestigious Slovenia Green Destination PLATINUM label after a successful recertification process. With this award, Laško has joined a select group of Slovenian destinations that have been awarded the highest recognition in the field of sustainability.

Key achievements, activities and projects over the last two years show how the destination remains committed to a green future, preserving nature, respecting the local community and providing a sustainable visitor experience.

2016
Slovenia Green
BRONZE

2019
Slovenia Green
GOLD

2022
Slovenia Green
PLATINUM



Thermana Laško

Thermana Laško remains committed to innovation, health, sustainability and social responsibility, as evidenced by numerous initiatives and awards. They are proud recipients of the Eko Marjetica environmental certificate or Ecolabel flower, the Bee Friendly Company title, the “Tap Water” certificate and the Slovenia Green Accommodation.

Thermana Laško celebrated 170 years of operation, 70 years of occupational therapy and more than 70 years of medical rehabilitation. They have been awarded quality certificates of Collective Brand Okusiti Laško (Taste Laško) for their local culinary offer, which includes: Laško thermal water, doughnut with overheated cream, a jubilee beer trio, Laški mushroom spread for congress banquets, beer menu. They have also been awarded the Prava izbira (Right Choice) certification, which recognises more nutritionally appropriate meals that are tailored to a healthy lifestyle.

They represented Slovenia as part of the new international technical secretariat for the methodology for calculating the environmental footprint of the hotel industry.

In the field of accessible tourism, a step forward was taken by organising the 5th World Parkinson's Table Tennis Championships aimed to promote the positive impact of physical exercise on Parkinson's patients.



Pirc Tourist Farm

The Pirc Tourist Farm, with a farming tradition dating back several centuries, expanded its activities to tourism in 2009, focusing on the green path. It offers three apartments for up to 16 people, surrounded by nature and providing picnic facilities, a playground, basketball court, archery range and farm-based activities.

In 2021, they formalised their sustainability operation with the international Green Key certificate, which attests to environmental responsibility and compliance with strict sustainability criteria. In 2023, they also joined the Green Scheme of Slovenian tourism and received the Slovenia Green Accommodation label, which further confirms their commitment to environmental protection and sustainable tourism development.



On the road to Zero Waste

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In 2023 and 2024, numerous activities were carried out to acquire a title Zero Waste municipality, with the main aim of raising awareness among residents about the importance of waste reduction, separation and recycling, and promoting sustainable management of natural resources. In 2024, a Zero Waste Strategy was also developed in cooperation with Ecologists Without Borders Association, detailing the steps and activities to facilitate the achievement of environmental goals towards a zero-waste society.

Under the Zero-Waste Living Labs project, eco-cups and a dishwasher for washing returnable packaging were purchased in 2024, which will help develop sustainable practices at events.



Clean-up campaign Let's polish golden Laško

As part of the initiative for a cleaner and tidier environment, the “Let's polish the golden Laško” clean-up campaigns were organised in 2023 and 2024.

The Municipality of Laško, together with Laško public utility company and STIK Laško, organised the municipality-wide clean-up campaigns which brought together citizens, associations, schools and other organisations. More than 400 citizens in all nine local communities took part, collecting an average of 3,500 kg of waste. The annual clean-up campaign has become a fine example of local cooperation and commitment to Laško's green future.



Annual meeting of My Laško tourism operators of the Laško destination

The annual meeting of tourism operators of the Laško destination under the collective name #myLaško is a traditional event where current and past projects in the field of tourism are presented. The content of the meetings is also aimed at educating and raising awareness among tourism operators, and, in 2024, the event was further rewarded with a presentation of career and employment opportunities in tourism for primary school pupils.



Training on sustainable tourism and sustainable business operations

A series of workshops focusing on sustainable tourism and sustainable business was organised in 2024:

- Trends/challenges in tourism (introduction to sustainable tourism, current trends and challenges, international, European and national responses to enhance understanding of sustainable tourism and implementation of sustainable practices, presentation of the Green Scheme of Slovenian tourism).
- Climate change and carbon footprint (the impact of climate change on tourism and the impact of tourism on climate change, what is a carbon footprint and how to measure it, and measures to reduce and offset it).
- Sustainable business in tourism enterprises (with a focus on rational use of water, energy and responsible waste management).

Training for tourist guides

In May 2024, training for new and existing tourist guides in the tourist area of the Municipality of Laško took place. Lectures were held at the Laško House, the Laško Museum and in the field. At the kick-off meeting at the Laško House, participants were also introduced to the Green Scheme for Slovenian tourism and the sustainable efforts of the Laško destination.



Laško's renewed boutique experience offer

STIK Laško, together with local providers, has upgraded the offer of authentic, boutique experiences at the destination. There are two revamped or enhanced experiences, the HoneyBrew Tour and the Startracks.

The HoneyBrew Laško Tour is tailored to couples and focuses on Laško and its brewing and beekeeping traditions, while Startracks focuses on families with children and is organised in the surroundings of the Jurklošter Carthusian Monastery. Several local providers are involved in the experience: Thermana Laško, the Laško Beekeepers' Association, Marko Pavčnik from Pavus Restaurant, the Laško Brewers' Association and the Odon Jurklošter Institute.



Gastronomic experiences - TKBZ Taste Laško



In 2023 and 2024, **the Territorial Collective Brand (TKBZ) Taste Laško** was joined by 5 guided gastronomic experience providers who actively guide visitors to explore authentic and unique destination stories.

On the HoneyBrew Laško Tour, visitors become honey brewers and make their own bittersweet beverages. The bee on duty guides them from the spring thermal water to the legendary beer, from the delicious bites of top chef Marek Pavčnik to the exquisite honey delicacies. At the end of the experience, they receive a "Honey Brewer" certificate.

Slapšak Farm invites you to experience an ancient lead and silver mine operating in Padež from 1550 to 1850. After sampling the miner's snack, visitors return from the mine to the homestead through the forest, where the farm owner introduces them to the typical tree species whose waste wood is used to make unique wooden products. This is followed by a visit to the mushroom farm and a workshop where you can buy wooden products.

The homestead of the greatest Slovenian epic poet Anton Aškerc has been preserved in its original form and converted into a museum with ethnological and Slavistic exhibitions. The Cup of Immortality experience introduces visitors to the literary collection, the "black" kitchen, the house, the small room, the "špelunka" ... In the more than 500-year-old granary, visitors then taste a variety of homemade cheeses and the Jelly from Aškerc's Damascene Rose.

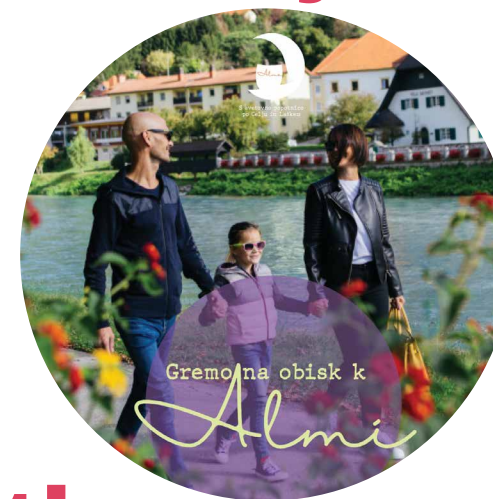
The herbal-culinary journey through time experience at the Plahtica Farm offers visitors a comprehensive interactive exploration of the Celtic, Ancient Roman and Carthusian herbal heritage of the Jurklošter area and its surroundings. The historic culinary experience of all three heritage cultures concludes with a tasting of certified dishes and beverages.

The honey fairytale at Apitourism Šolar introduces visitors to the mysterious world of the Carniolan honey bee which they explore in the local apiary, where apitherapy is practised. They pour their own jar of honey in the state-of-the-art honey dispensing and honeycomb storage facilities, followed by a workshop where they try their hand at making gingerbread.



Alma and stories between Laško and Celje

The Celeia Celje Institute and STIK Laško, the promoters of the tourism offer of the leading destinations of Celje and Laško, have designed a joint tourism product Alma - Follow the globetrotter around Celje and Laško. It comprises family-friendly, child-friendly and dog-friendly discoveries on the trails of a globetrotter. The product encourages the discovery of stories in Slovenia, active and adventurous leisure activities and the use of sustainable modes of mobility.



5 golden days at the Rimske Terme and Thermana Laško resorts

As part of the Golden Laško promotional campaign, a joint 5 Golden Days in Laško holiday has been developed with Rimske Terme and Thermana Laško resorts featuring the finest indulgences, such as a honey massage, the Golden Roman Woman ritual or the Honey and Milk Treatment, sustainable train transport and a wealth of local flavours.

Laška hiša/Laško House: culinary and creative stories

The Laško House is a restored traditional market house, which has stood in the town centre of Laško since the 18th century. In 2023 and 2024, it became a central space for culinary and creative workshops. Workshops included baking a traditional festive pastry "potica", making "štruklji" (rolled dumplings), baking carnival doughnuts, chocolate workshops, watercolour painting workshops for primary school children and painting workshops for adults. The workshops bring together local providers, visitors and the community and strengthen the importance of a sustainable and authentic destination experience.



Laško Beer and Flowers Festival with strong sustainability-promoting actions

The Laško Beer and Flowers Festival has made significant sustainability-enhancing strides in recent years by introducing a number of environmentally friendly measures.

The organisers took a holistic approach to waste separation and reducing the total weight of plastic packaging. Waste separation points were set up at eight locations and beer was poured exclusively into returnable, washable cups, taking around 60,000 single-use plastic cups out of circulation. Visitors to the festival camping site could exchange their collected waste from the campsite for a mug of beer or a glass of water at the "Recycle pub", thus making a significant contribution to keeping things clean outside the festival. The festival also featured the "Instead of a parking fee, a bee fee" campaign, where visitors made a voluntary contribution to the renovation of the beekeeping facilities in Laško in exchange for free parking. A special local culinary speciality, the Laški pes (the Laško dog), has also been conceived. The dish, created by chefs Iztok Gumzej and Branko Podmenik in collaboration with a local baker and the Laško Agricultural Cooperative, also features ingredients from the Collective Brand Okusiti Laško (Taste Laško).

Several months before the festival, visitors were encouraged to walk, cycle or take the train to the event. In cooperation with Slovenian Railways, additional trains and special ticket packages were organised in combination with a train ticket. Each year, the organisers also make sure that the local community is strongly involved in the overall organisation of the festival.



TKBZ Taste Laško

For five years now, the Territorial Collective Brand (TKBZ) Taste Laško has been successfully preserving and building on the area's gastronomic heritage, promoting sustainable gastronomic tourism and local self-sufficiency, and highlighting the importance of diet for health.

It makes an important contribution to the destination's visibility as green, healthy, boutique and sustainable location, and enables the creation of very substantive, holistic experiences. It is one of the 14 members of the Izvorno Slovensko (Authentic from Slovenia) Network, which is based on systematic networking, building an evaluation system, development consultancy, quality assessment, granting the right to use the quality certificate, and setting up a marketing, sales and logistics system.

The package includes:

- **46** providers of produce and food products,
- **12** providers of handicraft products,
- **11** providers of food and beverages served in a catering style,
- **1** House of Gastronomy, the Pavus Restaurant at Tabor Castle,
- **5** providers of guided gastronomic experiences.





Jed z natečaja Kuhajmo z laškimi pivi

In 2025, we also plan to prepare the documentation and launch a call for tender for the evaluation of gastronomic destination events eligible to be notified for the award of the quality certificate.

Under TKBZ "Taste Laško", the Local Food Exchange will take place in 2025 in partnership with the Municipality of Laško (owner of the brand), STIK Laško (manager of the brand), the Laško Public Agricultural Advisory Service and Thermana Laško* for the 6th year in a row.

These events allow networking between local food providers and public institutions and caterers, direct discussions on cooperation and tasting opportunities, exchange

of experiences, establishment of genuine interpersonal and business relationships, and education on current topics in the field of increasing self-sufficiency and short food chains. The local food exchanges in Laško were highlighted as a good practice in the context of the expert meetings of the Slovenian Organic Farmers' Association in June 2024 and January 2025.

** Thermana Laško, in cooperation with the certified providers of the Collective Brand Taste Laško, is an example to all other caterers at the destination - not only for its regular seasonal purchase of produce and products, but also for its promotion of local food providers and participation in the creation of boutique gastronomic experiences. Guests can also learn about Thermana's commitment to sustainable gastronomy through the "Let's respect local food" placemats, as well as the gastronomic offer in line with the standards for accessible tourism, for which Laško has received the highest European award - EDEN.*



The development of sustainable gastronomy is also ensured through the preparation and implementation of European projects,

such as the creation of a distinctive destination beer and culinary offer, the integration of the local community and public institutions on the way to a green future, the revitalisation of the Marof pond with the installation of a sewage treatment plant and educational videos on climate-friendly menus, etc., **as well as professional conferences**, such as the round table on the potential of overheated cream, the culinary specialities of the area, with the

creation of a distinctive destination offer of traditional and modernised dishes with overheated cream, presentations of good practices in reducing food waste in public institutions, catering establishments and households.

Local self-sufficiency is also promoted and facilitated

at weekly Home Corners, monthly Laško fairs and various events, such as Eco Days in Laško, culinary workshops at the Laško House, etc.

The destination is proud that the Municipality of Laško chooses from the treasure trove of Territorial Collective Brand Taste Laško for its business and festive gifts, thus showing its trust and support for the preservation and enhancement of the local food and handicraft heritage.



Hiking for all generations

There are 11 organised and marked thematic hiking trails in the Laško destination area, with a total length of about 65 km. Of these, two are used for sport and recreational activities, seven are thematic-tourist trails, one focuses on history and natural science and one is a forest path. There are many other marked mountain trails in Laško, including the Rečiška Mountain Circular Trail, the Trail to Šmohor, the Trail to Veliko Kozje and the Trail to Kopitnik.

All hiking trails are maintained throughout the year, thematic trails are maintained in line with the annual thematic trail maintenance plan, and mountain trails are looked after in an exemplary manner by members of the Alpine clubs. In 2023, as part of the maintenance works, we continued to replace worn and damaged traffic and non-traffic footpath signposts, damaged wooden bollards and urban walking equipment, and we also restored part of the A7 sports and recreation path - the Trail to Hum. In 2024, a part of the route of the B1 thematic-tourist hiking trail - The Three Churches Trail at the section below Krištof was developed, the B7 trail - The Linden Tree Trail was upgraded with the marking of the natural features of the 5 valleys of Šmohor, and a smart solar bench was installed at the paragliding take-off site at Malič. Several wooden footbridges were also rebuilt on the B4 trail from Slog to Log, and on the A7 trail - Trail to Hum, 100 m of the path were relocated and resurfaced due to a collapse of the soil.

Every year, as part of the promotion campaign of guided hikes along the Laško Trails, hikes are organised from April to December. In 2024, all nine planned hikes of the campaign were completed and 1,800 hikers took part.

Every year, one of the trails is entered into the competition for the Best Themed Trail, organised by the Slovenian Tourist Board as part of the My Land - Beautiful and Welcoming campaign. Together with the municipalities of Hrastnik, Trbovlje and Zagorje ob Savi, we entered the B6 thematic-tourist route - pot Srečno in the competition and came second in the category of thematic routes, winning the Silver Hospitality Award 2024.



Cycling for tourists and sports enthusiasts

Cycling lovers can choose from ten cycle routes, mostly on asphalt local roads, with a few sections on gravel and a few km of forest roads. In total, there are 324 km of marked routes for cyclists.

As part of the national D1 cycling route connecting Šentilj, Maribor, Celje, Ljubljana, Postojna, Divača and Koper, a new cycling bridge over the Savinja River was officially opened in Tremérje a few years ago. Together with the 2.5 km long Celje - Tremérje cycling section, it is part of the D1 national cycling route connecting Šentilj, Maribor, Celje, Ljubljana, Postojna, Divača and Koper. Part of the route from Tremérje to Laško currently runs along existing local and national roads, but Laško is working hard to develop a cycling route along the left bank of the Savinja River. The current estimate is that the works will be completed by 2025.

The Municipality of Laško is currently working on a project to improve the signposting of routes suitable for cycling with ground markings of cyclists at the edge of the road (mainly on local roads), as well as ground markings of cycling routes in the town of Laško itself.

Traffic and non-traffic cycling signalisation is maintained by STIK Laško and JP Komunala Laško public utility service as part of the annual maintenance of thematic routes and the maintenance plan for roads and public pathways.



Public bicycle-sharing system in the Laško area

Since September 2018, you can rent a bike in Laško and Rimske Toplice as part of the KolesCe public bicycle-sharing system.

You can rent a regular or electric bike:

- at four locations in Laško: on Trubarjevo nabrežje, at the Laško railway station, at Thermana Laško and at the Tri Lilije Hall,
- in Spodnja Rečica - by the football pitch,
- in Rimske Toplice - near the TIC, in the immediate vicinity of the Rimske terme Resort,
- in Jurklošter - parking area next to the shop and
- in Šentrupert nad Laškim.

European Mobility Week events

Every year, thousands of participating cities are connected in the effort to make mobility more human and environmentally friendly. Activities take place throughout the year, culminating in the European Mobility Week from 16 to 22 September which ends with the European Car-Free Day.

Every year, Laško joins the European Mobility Week and urges its citizens to reduce the use of motorised road transport and, through various activities and events, encourages them to adopt cleaner modes of mobility, such as walking, cycling and using public transport. Schools, associations, institutions, etc. take part in the programme of activities, which includes various events: Nordic walking, a 2 km test walk, a walk along the Three Churches Trail, guided tours of the town and its landmarks, and a visit to the Laško Museum.



Information and promotion

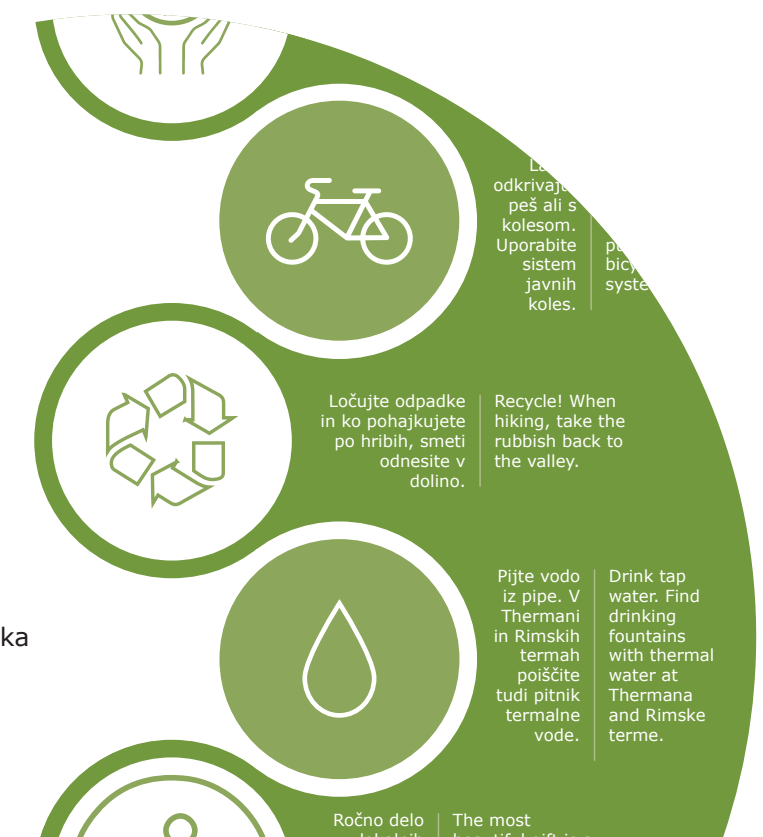
Since joining the sustainability scheme, the Laško destination has been working to raise awareness among visitors, residents and other stakeholders about the importance of responsible behaviour.

Promotional materials, messages and other promotional tools consistently reflect the values of the Laško destination and its commitment to sustainability. Green tips have been prepared for visitors and are publicly available on our website, at TIC Laško and TIC Rimske Toplice, and with major accommodation providers. In 2021, we launched a year-round "Green Laško" campaign, which communicates the destination's green values through social media. The campaign has been further developed over the last two years. Throughout the campaign, we also presented the sustainability indicators and projects implemented by the Laško destination and provided concrete advice on reducing noise, energy use and light pollution at the destination.

Discover Green Laško!

Turizem v Laškem razvijamo tako, da smo okolju in družbi prijazna destinacija. Smo zlati med zelenimi - prejemniki znaka Slovenia Green Gold.

Skupaj ohranimo našo destinacijo zeleno tudi za prihodnje generacije.





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