

HOSTEL BEARLOG – PUBLIC SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2025

(Reporting on the years 2023 and 2024)

1. Introduction

At **Hostel Bearlog**, managed and operated by *Javni zavod za turizem in kulturo Kočevje*, sustainability is at the core of our mission.

We are committed to protecting the unique natural and cultural heritage of Kočevsko while providing our guests with a responsible, authentic and educational experience.

This report summarizes our **commitments, goals, and progress** for 2023–2024 and presents our updated sustainability objectives for the coming years. It also serves as an invitation to our guests, staff, partners, and community to join us in achieving our sustainability vision.

Last updated: May 2025

2. Our Sustainability Commitments

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

We are committed to continuously reducing our environmental footprint by:

- Reducing energy use by **10%** and water use by **5%** by the end of **2026**.
- Replacing all cleaning products with **100% eco-certified** alternatives.
- Switching to **solar energy** as soon as the Municipality of Kočevje installs panels on our facility.
- Reducing **food-related emissions** by offering more vegetarian and vegan breakfast options.

Protecting and Supporting Biodiversity

We are located near some of Europe's last remaining primeval forests. Our biodiversity commitments include:

- Providing accurate visitor education about responsible behaviour in sensitive ecosystems and bear areas.
- Continuously training guides and staff to ensure safe and respectful wildlife observation.
- Participating annually in **reforestation programs**.
- Maintaining and promoting our **“Bear-proof Compost Bin”** campaign to reduce human-wildlife conflict.



Protecting and Respecting Human Rights

As a public institution, we strictly follow Slovenian and EU human rights legislation. Our commitments include:

- Zero tolerance for discrimination, exploitation, or harassment.
- Equal pay and opportunity regardless of gender, ethnicity, or background.
- Transparent wage system aligned with public sector standards.
- Fair recruitment and full compliance with labour laws.
- Training employees to identify and report signs of **human exploitation**.

Safeguarding Children

We recognize our shared responsibility to protect children and vulnerable guests. Our commitments include:

- Annual staff training on recognizing and reporting potential child abuse or exploitation.
- Maintaining a **Child Protection Policy** accessible to all staff and partners.
- Collaborating with local schools such as **Ljubo Šercer Elementary School** to support children with special needs through educational and creative projects.

3. Our 2023–2024 Sustainability Performance

We monitor and record our environmental performance through the **Travelife EPIT Tool**.

Indicator	2023	2024	Trend
Energy use	9,110 kWh	8,996 kWh	↓ Slight decrease
Waste produced	3,958 kg	4,008 kg	↑ Slight increase
Total CO ₂ emissions	2,693.03 kgCO ₂ e	2,751.92 kgCO ₂ e	↑ Slight increase
Avg. CO ₂ e per guest night	1.02 kg	1.11 kg	↑ Slight increase

Summary:

While our total emissions slightly increased due to a rise in visitor numbers, **we managed to save more energy**, showing efficiency gains.

Our next steps include greater waste reduction and improved recycling management.

4. 2025–2026 Sustainability Goals

Goal	Deadline	Responsible
Reduce energy use by 10% and water use by 5%	End of 2026	Entire team
Switch to 100% eco-certified cleaning supplies	May 2026	Hostel manager
Increase locally sourced food to 75%	May 2026	Hostel manager
Continue “Bear-proof Compost Bin” campaign	Ongoing	All employees
Annual sustainability and refresher trainings	Ongoing	Hostel manager
Participate in reforestation of degraded areas	November 2025	Hostel manager
Improve awareness and training on child protection	Continuous	Hostel manager

5. Community and Social Engagement

- We actively support **local artists** by displaying and selling their work.
- We collaborate with **children with special needs**, helping them develop life skills through gardening projects.
- All staff are **local residents**, strengthening our economic and cultural ties.
- We ensure accessibility for guests with disabilities through barrier-free infrastructure.
- We maintain transparent communication channels for community feedback via our website and social media.

6. Staff Welfare and Fair Work Practices

Employee Feedback Process

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about general working conditions through:

- **Anonymous suggestion box** located in the staff area.
- Direct communication with the **Hostel Manager or CEO**.
- Email reporting system, directly to the hostel manager:
All reports are reviewed confidentially and addressed promptly.

Disciplinary Procedure

- We have written a clear informative summary of the **disciplinary actions (as mandated by Slovenian law for public workers and collective contracts)** outlining:
- Clear distinctions between **minor** and **major misconduct** (e.g. lateness vs. gross negligence).
- Proportionate consequences for each type of offence.
- Accessibility of the procedure in written form at the premises.
- Explanation of the policy in understandable language for all employees.

7. Invitation to Our Stakeholders

We invite **guests, local residents, suppliers, and partners** to join us in our sustainability journey:

- Support local artists and sustainable producers featured at the hostel.
- Reduce water and energy consumption during your stay.
- Participate in our **“Bear-proof Compost Bin”** initiative.
- Share your ideas and feedback via several feedback channels (hostel e-mail, guest book, online and physical questionnaires, Booking.com, personally at the reception)
- Together, we can make Kočevsko a model for responsible tourism.

8. Contact & Acknowledgements

- **Hostel Bearlog – Javni zavod za turizem in kulturo Kočevje**
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Date: May 2025