

LOCAL COMMUNITY POLICY

Hostel Bearlog is committed to caring for people, the local community, and the planet. We believe this commitment is essential for business success and a key responsibility of a global citizen.

Hostel Bearlog works closely with the local community. By collaborating with local producers and artisans, we strengthen local development and growth. Below are the key areas in which we support the local community:

- **Employment of local residents.** All employees come from the local area, fostering a stronger sense of responsibility. For guided tours, we prioritize hiring local guides.
- **Local supply chain – self-sufficiency.** The local processing and production of food, along with a short supply chain, benefits both consumers and society. These benefits include increased self-sufficiency, economic growth, rural population retention, landscape maintenance, tourism support, and a lower carbon footprint. A short food supply chain ensures greater food safety and quality. Suppliers are carefully selected to meet HACCP standards, food safety regulations, and other legal requirements.
- **Locally sourced food products.** We purchase the following local food items: Kostel rakija (protected origin), Kočevje forest honey, locally harvested fruit jams, pickled cucumbers, organic dairy products (cheese, yogurt, butter), locally foraged fruit and herbal teas, and organic vegetables and fruits, especially apples.
- **Local handcrafted products.** We use and sell handmade products, particularly wooden items, as wood is the most significant local raw material. Each product holds value as it is made from environmentally friendly materials by local artisans. This supports and promotes local craftsmanship.
- **Volunteering.** Among our products, we offer items made by students of the local Ljubo Šercer Primary School. This initiative allows visitors to contribute through voluntary donations, which help fund the students' school garden, enabling them to grow their own produce.
- **Community cleanup efforts.** Each year, we encourage employees to participate in the "Clean Up Kočevsko" campaign. As an organization, we actively take part by cleaning and maintaining the surroundings of our facilities.
- **Local service providers.** Maintenance work on our facilities is carried out by local service providers, including painters, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, the Kočevje Business Incubator, IT technicians, and others.

Achievements by 2025:

- Zavod Kočevsko encourages producers to cultivate high-quality local and traditional foods. This has enhanced the breakfast experience at the hostel by incorporating local produce such as compote made from local fruits, Kočevje forest honey, jams, pickled cucumbers, homemade butter, organic dairy products (cheese, yogurt), and herbal teas.



- We established a partnership with a local laundry service for washing bed linens.
- The hostel follows a strict procurement policy by avoiding frozen food, prioritizing local products despite higher costs, and favoring local service providers. Out-of-season fruit and vegetables are sourced in preserved forms (e.g., dried or pickled) instead of exotic imports. We ensure suppliers meet at least one of the following criteria: sustainable production, recycled materials, organic certification, or environmentally friendly packaging.
- We actively reduce packaging waste by purchasing food and other essentials in bulk (e.g., cereals, soap, cleaning supplies, juice). Preference is given to products in returnable packaging (glass, cardboard, crates).
- In 2022, Zavod Kočevsko launched the **O, KOČEVSKO!** quality certification, recognizing local producers, processors, restaurateurs, and artisans for high-quality products, produce, and dishes. The certification process was repeated in 2024, adding more certified products.
- We established a dedicated corner in the hostel to showcase, promote, and sell **O, KOČEVSKO!** certified local products, further introducing them to our guests.

Goals for 2025 and 2026:

- Increase the offering of locally sourced food. By the end of 2026, at least 70% of the breakfast menu will consist of locally produced food.
- Maintain and uphold all previously achieved goals.
- Display photographs and stories of local farmers and producers supplying breakfast ingredients, allowing guests to connect with the people behind their meals.
- Actively encourage local producers to adopt sustainable practices.
- We will attend a forestation event as a collective from Zavod Kočevsko

Signature and stamp:



Date: 5th January, 2025