

STB's key achievements from 2015 to 2021

In recent years, the STB has succeeded in putting **Slovenia on the world tourism map** as a green and sustainably-oriented destination. The priority of the newly independent STB has been to reorganise itself and to undergo a **digital marketing transformation**, through which it has developed state-of-the-art digital channels, tools and content. The number of social media followers has **increased from 700,000 in 2017 to 1.8 million today**. The STB's digital campaigns in more than 30 countries have totalled **almost one billion ad impressions in 2019 alone**. The STB has partnered with the best in the field, such as National Geographic and the BBC. In the 2015-2021 period, Slovenia became, **for the first time, a partner of ITB Berlin, the world's largest travel trade fair**; partnerships have also been concluded with global media and outstanding individuals such as Ana Roš, Tina Maze, Luka Dončić, Primož Roglič, Tadej Pogačar and others, who have become ambassadors of Slovenian tourism. The STB has participated in all major **international sporting events in Slovenia, enabled the broadcasting of the Tour of Slovenia on Eurosport, the pan-European television sports network**, and highlighted Slovenia as an attractive cycling destination with the successes of our cyclists in the **Tour de France**. In Slovenia, the STB has hosted **major global associations of tour operators** (Virtuoso, Signiture, ECTAA, ABTA, IGTM, Connections and others) and from 300 to 500 foreign media representatives annually. **More than 140 business events** are held yearly **abroad and in Slovenia**, and more than 1,300 business meetings between Slovenian tourism providers and interested tour operators, representatives of travel agencies, airlines and other publics are held annually at travel trade fairs and shows.

Through consistent and systematic promotion, **Slovenia has appeared on lists compiled by the most prestigious global media (Lonely Planet, Conde Nast Traveller, Financial Times, Forbes, National Geographic, The Independent, The Guardian, The Times, The Sun, CNN, and many others)**, and has earned a reputation by garnering numerous awards for sustainability, digitalisation and marketing. Consistent and systematic promotion has also resulted in exceptional publicity, amounting to EUR 43 million in the key markets for Slovenia's tourism industry in 2020 alone. All this has brought Slovenia the desired visibility and positioning in foreign markets, which is the mission of the STB.

Through various projects, the STB has promoted the development and promotion of genuine Slovenian experiences with high added value. Under the comprehensive national programme, the **Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism (GSST)**, the STB has introduced sustainable tourism into the business of all stakeholders; to date, **199 destinations and providers** have joined the Green Scheme. This year, the Green Scheme has been upgraded with the GREEN CUISINE label for sustainable cuisine. The STB has launched **a project to eliminate single-use plastics** in tourism. **The Slovenia Unique Experiences project** has been developed to support the development of green, innovative products with high added value. The development and promotion of cuisine has been greatly boosted by the launch of the first **Michelin Guide** to Slovenia and the designation of Slovenia as the holder of the **title European Region of Gastronomy 2021**. In 2021, the STB has been laying the **foundations for the development of sports tourism** and for systematic bidding for Slovenia to host international sporting events.

The STB has established a new tourism organisation and **close cooperation with 35 leading destinations** within four macro destinations. In cooperation with destinations, product associations and suppliers, the STB particularly highlights the key products of Slovenian tourism, such as Slovenian natural health resorts, the meetings industry, cuisine, active holidays, cities, and culture. It closely cooperates with all institutions engaged in the tourism industry, such as the Tourism and Hospitality Chamber of Slovenia (TGZS), the Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia (OZS), the Tourist Association of Slovenia (TZS), the Association of Slovenian Natural Spas (SSN), the Slovenian Convention Bureau (KUS), GIZ Slovenia Outdoor, and other institutions, line and other ministries, embassies abroad and other tourism-related institutions.

The number of foreign tourists **increased by 76% in the five years prior to the pandemic** and the number of overnight stays increased by 66%, with travel inflows in 2019 29% higher than in 2014.

The performance of the STB is measured on the basis of the Balanced Scorecard methodology, which enables the efficient implementation of the tourism strategy and the transparent and cost-effective operation of the agency. **The high satisfaction ratings with the work of the STB team on the part of the tourism industry and good climate among the employees have been a highlight throughout the years.**

In 2020, the STB faced a series of changes and adaptation challenges in the face of the pandemic, focused overnight on the domestic market and nearby markets, developed virtual platforms for business events, new forms of education and information for tourism stakeholders, and remained true to the values of the I FEEL SLOVENIA brand and the vision of Slovenia as a green boutique destination. The STB has upgraded the sustainable practices of Slovenian tourism with responsible travel standards and the Green & Safe label. The agency is now a valuable asset in the relaunch of tourism, as competition in the market has become fierce. It has provided additional support to the economy through several calls for tenders for co-financing promotion and development (for tourist agencies, tourist guides, leading destinations).

Slovenia has become a world leader in developing sustainable tourism and, at the initiative of Slovenia, the European Travel Commission (ETC) decided to establish European national models of sustainable tourism development on the basis of the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism. The STB started to develop new performance indicators for tourism, which will focus on sustainability, responsibility and the satisfaction of local communities. At the next ETC General Meeting, which will take place in Slovenia in 2022, the STB will formally launch the development of new performance indicators for European tourism.

Distinguished recognitions and awards received by the STB and Slovenia as a tourist destination and notable achievements since 2015, which have brought Slovenia exceptional visibility, a great reputation and recognisability:

Awards and rankings on sustainability

In 2016, Slovenia was named the **world's first Green Country** and received a number of awards for successfully implementing its sustainability commitment at the national level, including the **World Legacy Destination Leadership Award** for sustainable destination management from **National Geographic** in 2017, mainly due to its Green Scheme.

Other prestigious awards for Slovenia's and the STB's successful efforts towards sustainability include:

- At the event Global Green Destinations Days 2021, **seven Slovenian destinations bearing the SLOVENIA GREEN label were included in the Top 100 Destination Sustainability Stories** list.
- At the event Global Green Destinations Days 2020, **nine Slovenian destinations were included in the Sustainable Destinations TOP 100 list.**
- As part of the Global Green Destinations Days conference, **31 destinations within the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism made the 2019 Sustainable Destinations Top 100 list.**
- At **WTM London**, Slovenia received **three International Travel & Tourism awards** for its creativity in promoting and developing sustainable practices.
- At the conference of the **European Cultural Tourism Network**, the STB **received the first prize** in the Innovation & Digitalisation category of the **ECTN Destination of Sustainable Cultural Tourism 2019 Awards.**
- At the ITB Berlin 2018 travel trade fair, the STB earned the **Sustainable Destinations 2018 Award in the Best of the Planet – Best of Europe category.** Destinations from the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism were the winners in the Best of Europe category at the Global Top 100 Sustainable Destinations Awards.
- At the **MITT Moscow 2016 trade show**, Slovenia won a "**Sustainable Tourism Award**".
- The **STB received the Sustainable Top 100 Destination Award in the Best of Europe 2020** category for introducing sustainable models in tourism at the national level.

- As part of the Weekend Premium Awards 2020, the Italian magazine Weekend Premium **bestowed on Slovenia an award in the Green in Europe** category for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism.

Awards from the most prominent tourism associations, organisations and international institutions

- The United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA) **declared Slovenia the second fastest growing destination in 2020.**
- In 2020, Virtuoso, the leading global network of agencies, accepted the STB, as one of the four national tourism organisations from Europe selected, into the "**Sustainability Community**".
- In 2019, Virtuoso **ranked the STB among the best national tourism organisations in the world and declared Slovenia the hottest destination of the year.**
- In 2018, Slovenia was awarded the **title of European Region of Gastronomy** by the **International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism (IGCAT).**
- **The Tour of Slovenia 2018**, of which the STB is a partner, received the award for **Best Sports Event.**
- At the Moscow International Travel & Tourism (MITT) trade show in 2018, **Slovenia was presented the Best Spa Destination award.**
- **In 2017, Flight Network declared the Slovenian Tourist Board one of the World's Best Tourism Organisations.**
- The Slovenian Travel Press association (STP) **awarded the STB the Crystal Triglav 2017**, the award for supreme achievements in Slovenian tourism.
- As part of the 2016 ITB Berlin travel trade fair, **Slovenia, as a tourist destination, was recognised as the Best Emerging Destination** by the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).
- The **European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations (ECTAA) ranked Slovenia as the Preferred Destination for 2016.**
- In 2016, the London-based Legatum Institute ranked Slovenia first on the *Legatum Prosperity Index*, a ranking of the countries that are the most successful in preserving the natural environment.

STB awards for communication, promotion tools and campaigns

- **The video "Time to #stayhome. Turn to nature and dream" has earned many international awards and recognitions** in 2021:
 - o a gold award at the International Tourism Film Festival in South Africa,
 - o a gold award at the International Tourism Film Festival in Turkey,
 - o a silver award at the International Festival of Tourism & Environmental Film – Silafest in Serbia,
 - o a gold award at the Terres Travel Festival in Spain,
 - o a silver award at the International Tourism Film Festival "Tourfilm Riga" in Latvia,
 - o a gold award at the Slovenian Advertising Festival (SOF),
 - o top ranking in the ETC-CIFFT 2020 competition.
- **The STB has received a total of 21 awards from The Golden City Gate** (as part of ITB Berlin) for excellence in tourism promotion.

In 2021, it won four gold and three silver awards from the Golden City Gate:

 - o a gold award for the music in the promotional video Feel Sloveni@Business Date; a gold award for the printed guide Slovenia Outdoor; a gold award for the Tour de France promotional campaign, and a gold award for the Taste Slovenia website;
 - o a silver award for the promotional video *Time to stay home. Turn to nature and dream*; a silver award for the Green & Safe responsible travel standards communications platform, and a silver award for innovation for IGTV Feel Slovenia.

In 2020, it won two silver awards and one bronze award:

 - o a silver award for the *Taste Slovenia* publication in the print advertising category and a silver award for the Instagram profile *Feelslovenia* in the online category, and
 - o a bronze award for the promotional film Slovenia Green. The story of green Slovenia in the ecotourism category.

In 2019, the STB earned four gold and two silver awards:

- A gold award was earned in the digital campaigns category entitled *Two Million Reasons Why We Feel Slovenia*, in the innovation category for successful implementation of the *Stories on Instagram @feelslovenia* project, in the printed promotion category for the publication *Media Kit*, and in the category of international campaigns for four videos entitled *Natural elements of Slovenia: Earth. Water. Fire. Air*.
- A silver award was received in the ecotourism category for the *Alpe Adria Trail* video spot, in the category of new inspiring content on the websites of leading destinations as part of the Slovenian central tourism portal www.slovenia.info.
- At the 2019 ITB Berlin travel trade fair, the STB also won an **award from FVW magazine**, Germany's leading professional magazine in the field of tourism and business travel, which ranked Slovenia first in the Destination Ranking Central Europe 2019.

The STB received two silver awards in 2018:

- for the *Feel Pure Love* promotional video and for the *Cultural Experiences Slovenia* publication.

In 2017:

- the STB won the Golden City Gate Award 2017 for the *Slovenia. Make New Memories* promotional video.
- The STB was given the distinguished World Legacy Destination Leadership Award by National Geographic for its sustainable destination management.

In 2016:

- the STB received two *Das Goldene Stadttor* awards for promotional spots as part of the ITB travel trade fair.

- **The Taste Slovenia website** earned two awards in the 2021 *Websi Web Champions* contest as the website with the best comprehensive user experience and 2nd place in the tourism category.
- **The STB virtual business event series, *Feel sLOVEni@ Business Date***, received two awards at the 2021 Conventa Crossover conference, namely in the B2B events category and at the Conventa Best Award – Grand Prix.
- The STB won **first place in the WEBSI Web Champions 2020 competition for the campaign *The Time is Now. My Slovenia***.
- The STB also received the Werbe Grand Prix 2020 award for the publication *Taste Slovenia – My way of tasting diversity* in the category of printed destination publications.
- The project of **presenting Slovenia**, carried out by the STB and the global media giant **The New York Times** in 2019, won the prestigious bronze award at the **Native Advertising Awards 2021** in the category of Best Series of Sponsored Articles.
- With its national promotional campaign, *Two Million Reasons Why I Feel Slovenia*, the STB was selected among the finalists for the prestigious Content Marketing Award 2019 bestowed by the **American Content Marketing Institute** in the category of **Excellence in Content Marketing**.
- In 2019, the STB earned **two prestigious CWT Awards** (The Chinese Tourist Welcome Award) at the ITB China travel trade show in Shanghai:
 - in the category *Best practice solutions on how to attract and satisfy Chinese visitors around the world*, it received an award for the joint promotion campaign *Experience Croatia, Feel Slovenia* together with the Croatian National Tourist Board;
 - for successful communication activities on the Chinese social network WeChat under the slogan *I feel Slovenia WeChat*.
- The STB received the bronze **Werbe Grand Prix 2018** award for the ***Kulturstaedte*** publication (Historical Towns and Cities).
- **The Healthy Waters campaign, launched by the STB**, was the winner of **the WTM International Travel & Tourism Awards 2018 in the *Best in Wellness* category**.

- The STB received two awards at **The WorldMediaFestival|TOURISM 2018**, in Hamburg: the global digital campaign *Slovenia. Make New Memories.* won the **Intermedia-Globe GOLD Award**, and the *Slovenia Impressions: Feel Pure Love* promotional video earned the **Intermedia-Globe SILVER Award**.
- At the SEMPL 2018 Regional Media Trends Conference, **the STB received the Golden Sempler Award** for the *Two Million Reasons Why We Feel Slovenia* campaign.
- In 2017, the *Slovenia. Make New Memories* global digital campaign, launched by the STB and the company PM, poslovni mediji d.o.o., was presented the **2017 National WEBSI Award**.
- At the WTM London 2016 global travel industry trade show, Slovenia ranked among the four finalists nominated for the **Global Sports Tourism Impact Award**.

Slovenia's most prominent rankings on lists of recommended countries and the STB's awards from prestigious international media

- **Lonely Planet** ranked Slovenia fifth among the 10 countries it recommended visiting in 2022.
- Slovenia has received several awards from the **Food and Travel Italia Awards**: in 2021, for the **Best Foreign Destination of the Year**, the **2020 Food and Travel Italia "Nation of the Year" award** for culinary excellence, and Food and Travel Magazine Italia's award ***Emerging Nation in Eno-Gastronomy 2019*** for the fastest growing culinary destination. The Director of the STB Representative Office in Italy, Aljoša Ota, was the recipient of a special award for being the head of the most successful tourism organisation in Italy 2021.
- **Condé Nast Traveller** ranked Slovenia first on the list of the most desirable holiday destinations for 2021.
- **The portal Apolitical**, in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and Mastercard, placed the STB on the list of 75 most innovative organisations in tourism in 2021.
- In 2018, **Lonely Planet** placed Slovenia on one of its four lists of destinations it recommended visiting in 2019.