

PRESS RELEASE

At the World Travel Market (WTM) in London, Slovenia became one of the finalists for the prestigious Sport Tourism Impact Award bestowed by top industry experts and Bled was proclaimed the Sport Tourism Town 2016, with Kranjska Gora also included among the finalists

Slovenia ranks among the finalists for the prestigious Global Sport Tourism Impact Award at London's WTM

London, 7 November 2016 – The leading global event for the travel industry, the *World Travel Market (WTM) in London*, was opened today and just saw the conclusion of the first global meeting of sports tourism experts (*Global Sport Tourism Summit*), with Slovenia named as one of the four finalists competing for the first-ever *Global Sport Tourism Impact Award*. Bled was awarded the distinguished *Sport Tourism Town* for 2016 designation, while finalists competing for this recognition also included Kranjska Gora.

A panel of prominent representatives from sports and tourism included Slovenia among the four finalists for the ***Global Sport Tourism Impact Award***, which is a result of the successful nomination made by the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) and its London office. STB substantiated Slovenia's candidacy by highlighting that the country is actively focused on sustainable development and on growth as a sports destination boasting a well-organised sports infrastructure, and by pointing out that these efforts are accompanied with a great deal of innovation. Slovenia's numerous attributes that attract athletes and sports teams include the green nature, tranquillity, favourable climate, excellent infrastructure, and expertise available regarding the preparation of athletes, diagnostics and sports rehabilitation. Slovenia's entire appearance at WTM is a major step forward in terms of systematic development and marketing of sports tourism, as well as in terms of joint and coordinated activities of destinations and service providers.

The central event featured the presentation of awards in nine different categories in sports tourism. Besides the most prestigious award, i.e. the *Sport Tourism Impact Award*, the category of candidates competing for the 2016 **Sport Tourism Town** accolade included two Slovenian destinations, namely **Bled** and **Kranjska Gora**; both candidates made a convincing impression on the panel, which had five finalists to choose from and **awarded Bled in this particular category**.

*"The fact that the expert panel included Slovenia among the finalists for the renowned **Global Sport Tourism Impact Award** is extremely important for positioning it as an excellent destination for sports tourism, preparations for athletes and organisation of international sporting events. **Being among the finalists for the award is a recognition** that we have all made a big step forward in the development and marketing of sports tourism; **it is a motivation for our work in the future, representing especially the increased attractiveness of Slovenia** regarding decisions made by organisers of athletes' preparations and events, as well as tourists when choosing their destinations. The fact that Bled won and Kranjska Gora competed as a finalist for the Sport Tourism Town 2016 designation is another encouraging achievement that further consolidates Slovenia's position as a superb sports tourism destination on the global tourist map. Awards of this type are certainly a great asset when it comes to marketing tourism products," said **Maja Pak, Director of the Slovenian Tourist Board**.*

The event, which attracted leading experts in sports, tourism and marketing as well as organisers of major sporting events made a lasting impression and revealed new trends in the increasingly growing segment of sports tourism.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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