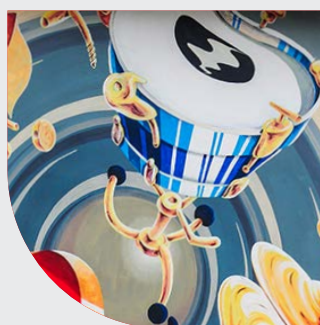


Best Practices
of Ljubljana
Tourism

DEVELOPMENT OF LJUBLJANA'S CULTURAL QUARTERS



Ljubljana Tourism



DEVELOPMENT OF LJUBLJANA'S CULTURAL QUARTERS

Ljubljana is composed of several quarters or districts, organised into district communities, an arrangement that promotes decentralised governance and enables residents to actively participate in shaping city life. Today, these quarters are becoming increasingly attractive from a tourism perspective, offering an authentic connection to local life far from the well-trodden tourist routes. While the city centre is renowned for its architecture, cultural heritage, vibrant hospitality and event offerings, the quarters captivate visitors with their unique atmosphere, local stories, and opportunities to experience the everyday life of Ljubljana's residents.

Photography: Andrej Lamut



Challenges and goals

Findings from the 2024 Survey on the Characteristics of Foreign Visitors show that the majority of tourist flows still concentrate in the narrow city centre – primarily areas such as the Ljubljana riverbanks, Kongresni trg square, Čopova ulica street, and Ljubljana Castle. This concentration presents a significant challenge for balanced tourism development in the city.

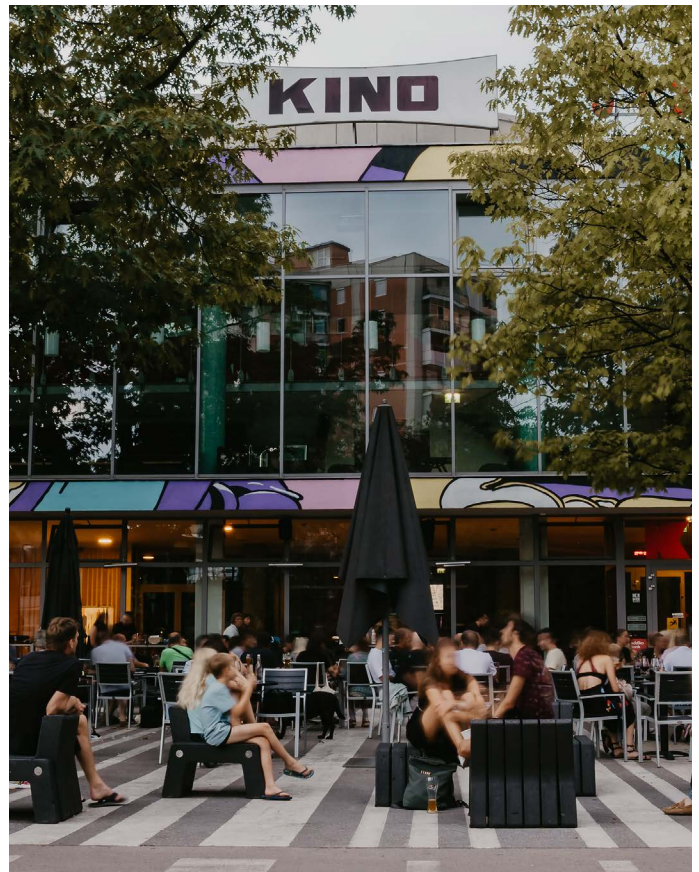
Ljubljana Tourism addresses this challenge with two key strategic orientations:

1. promoting the extension of the length of stay and positioning Ljubljana as an attractive destination for short getaways;
2. decentralising tourist flows outside the city centre, with an emphasis on developing new experiences in different city quarters.

Aiming to achieve these goals, Ljubljana Tourism collaborated with the Nea Culpa agency and initiated the planned development of alternative, locally rooted tourism offerings. Cultural quarters (CQ) as hubs of creativity and local life are at the heart of this development – spaces where cultural institutions, NGOs, local associations, young creators, event producers, bars and pubs, schools, entrepreneurs, and residents jointly create diverse, authentic, and visitor-accessible content.

Each cultural quarter functions as a comprehensive microlocation offering a unique experience: cultural events, exhibitions, guided tours with local stories, culinary recommendations, and sports activities. At the same time, these quarters remain living spaces where locals create, work, and live – contributing to a higher quality of life in the city.

The development of Ljubljana's cultural quarters is carried out in close cooperation among Ljubljana Tourism, the Department of Culture of the City of Ljubljana, and numerous partners from the cultural, creative, and tourism sectors. The joint vision they pursue is: Ljubljana as a globally recognised space of culture and creativity – a city that is pleasant to live in, inspiring to work in, and inviting to visit. At the centre of development is the satisfaction of residents, as we believe that only a city that serves its inhabitants well can also provide a quality experience to visitors.



Photography: Boštjan Tacol in Matjaž Tavčar

Course of the project

In selected quarters, we conducted moderated dialogues with key stakeholders and residents, formed working groups, and prepared action plans for development. In the process, we also identified three key target groups seeking connection with the local environment and experiences beyond established tourist routes: explorers (guests looking for authentic content and a deeper understanding of the local environment), socialisers (fans of local events and cuisine), and individual guests (travellers travelling alone or as couples who want to escape the crowds).

In 2022, we identified three existing cultural quarters (Tabor, Soteska, and Križevniška), which we strengthened through targeted promotional activities. Simultaneously, we began developing two new areas: Šiška and Moste. Each has its own story, community, and creative potential. The selection criteria included the presence of cultural content providers, interesting meeting points where residents gather, and existing local dynamics.

We established a cooperation model in the newly onboarded quarters, formed local working groups (Šiška CQ and Moste CQ), aligned development orientations, and began implementing joint promotional and development activities. In doing so, we respected the geographic boundaries of existing district communities.

An important milestone was the setting up of dedicated websites for the respective cultural quarters on the Ljubljana Tourism portal (April 2023). In the autumn of the same year, we organised the “Cela šiškarija” (“Šiška Heyday”) joint presentation event. This served to present diverse activities and showcase the vibrant, authentic quarter to local residents and visitors.

Our development approach operates on the principle of not intervening in the physical structure of the space, but preserve the identity of existing communities. We work according to the “bottom-up” principle: listening to local initiatives, encouraging existing content, and supporting development within the already established social and cultural fabric.

Cultural Quarters

as comprehensive microlocations offer a unique experience



cultural events



exhibitions



guided tours with local stories



culinary recommendations



sports activities

3 key target groups



explorers



socialisers



individual guests

Source: Survey among international visitors (n=762)

Results and achievements

Between 2022 and 2024, the cultural quarters project established itself as an example of best practices at the intersection of urban tourism, culture, and community development. Its integration into key strategic documents of the City of Ljubljana (MOL) and Ljubljana Tourism (e.g., MOL Culture Development Strategy, TL Strategy, Ustvarjalna Ljubljana) demonstrates systemic support and a long-term vision for the project.

The project succeeded in establishing horizontal partnerships among cultural creators, creative industries, and local residents. Today, these cultural quarters unite more than 50 organisations that co-create the identity of these spaces. In addition to substantive support, the project also enables targeted co-financing of events and festivals in individual quarters, stimulating local cultural production.

In 2022 and 2023, we developed two action plans for the development of cultural quarters and began their gradual implementation. In the Šiška CQ, the “Cela šiškarija” event connected 10 partners, organised over 30 events, and developed thematic guided tours throughout the quarter. Artistic and environmental interventions included the removal of 25 m² of graffiti on the Computer Museum edifice and its surroundings, as well as support for the creation of a monumental mural by the Italian artist Ciba (Pier Paolo Spinazzè).

To facilitate visitor orientation, we also published a pocket map of the Šiška CQ featuring unique icons designed by Ljubo Bratina.

The cultural quarters have now become a recognisable part of Ljubljana Tourism’s promotional campaigns, and are increasingly featured in international media as an example of a sustainable approach to urban tourism development.

Event “Cela Šiškarija”

in the period 2022–2023



10
connected
partners



30+
events



artistic and
environmental
interventions



pocket map of
the Šiška CQ

Conclusion and next steps

The cultural quarters are not closed entities, but rather an open and dynamic system of collaboration that grows together with the city and its visitors. They offer an opportunity to develop tourism that is sustainable, inclusive, and rooted in local identity. Instead of constructing new attractions, we build upon existing potential – local programmes, creativity, art, gastronomy, crafts, and authentic connections with residents. In this way, Ljubljana is becoming a city where tourism is not an imposed element, but rather one that enriches and enhances urban life.



City of
Ljubljana

