



# 2020 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

**Title of the Story:** The Soča Valley Campaign

**Destination Name:** *(include any state, province or region)*

Soča Valley

**Country:** Slovenia

**Submitter name:** Alenka Rutar

**Email address:** alenka.rutar@dolina-soce.si

**Position:** Green coordinator for the Soča Valley

**Nomination Category:** *(Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)*

- Culture & Communities
- Environment & Climate
- Nature & Ecotourism
- Islands & Seaside
- Immediate responses in dealing with the COVID -19
- Post COVID -19 recovery
- One of the 17 SDGs\* *(if yes, which one)* Click or tap to choose

\*The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. What are the Sustainable Development Goals? <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

For further information on Tourism for SDGs: <http://tourism4sdgs.org/>

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices [here](#)



# DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

*Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.*

## Issues faced

The outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 virus infections in China at the end of 2019 spread to the European Union countries in February 2020. Right from the beginning the countries bordering to the Republic of Slovenia were infected. Slovenia declared an epidemic on 12 March 2020, due to the increased number of cases, while World Health Organization declared a pandemic. Tourism stopped, there were no guests, but we wanted to keep in touch with them. We wanted to persuade the guests to stay at home in these uncertain times, and at the same time not to forget the Soča Valley and its unspoiled nature away from the crowds that will be waiting and expecting them in better times.

In April 2020, Turizem Dolina Soče launched a campaign within which a short film has been published, entitled Back to the Spring (in Slovenian Nazaj k izviru). The viewer travels through the film over the white waters and through the gorges against the flow, all the way to the mysterious cave, where the river springs to the surface. The emerald river is the sole hero of the film and travelling backwards invites the viewer to stop and reflect, to become more aware and begin anew. The film reminds us not to forget about good things even if the times are hard. It sends a message that the flow of life is unstoppable, and that Soča Valley will wait for its visitors. The energy of the river gives us power to wade across the tough times, while the film itself invites us to reflect: the end of the epidemic must not be a return to our old habits, but a chance for a new beginning, greater awareness and better tomorrow.

Within the campaign a Virtual walk through the Soča valley was produced, which includes 360-degree photographs and short descriptions of paths.

Later, we have also joined an all-Slovenian motivational campaign Zdaj je čas. Moja Slovenija., which invites Slovenians to take a shorter or longer vacation in Slovenia, discover new adventures and share these adventures using the hashtag #mojaslovenija. We have joined the campaign with a design Zdaj je čas. Moja Slovenija. Moja Dolina Soče. In the campaign we have included 8 ambassadors of the Soča Valley, addressing Slovenians.

Together with, and as members of the Julian Alps community, we have created a motivational film Juliana Trail – 16 moments of silence (in Slovenian Pohodniška pot Juliana Trail – 16 trenutkov tišine). The message of the film is that the time has come when every step has to be re-thought and we have to allow ourselves to feel the magnificence of nature and return to our own self. The 16 stages of the Juliana hiking Trail make it simple to find everyday magic and our inner reason while submerging ourselves into the moments of silence.



After the epidemic (in June 2020) we have shot another film, which serves as a continuation of the first film Back to the Spring. The new film is entitled Go with the Flow (in Slovenian: Grem s tokom): our feelings are directed forward, with the flow (the river in the film also flows down). We want to stress that the Soča Valley is still a leading outdoor destination, but at the same time a safe destination. It offers relaxation and delight in nature and at the same time a personal solo experience. The visitor is a part of this pleasant atmosphere in the valley and feels safe. The longer film will be posted on social media at the end of June, followed by a Slovenian media campaign, using the design from the video.

#### Methods, steps and tools applied

During the epidemic, people were connecting with the world online, so we tried to approach them in this way, that is, digitally.

#### Key success factors

Online connection, accessibility to the Internet, cooperation of providers, good epidemiological picture, unspoiled nature of the destination, where there is no mass tourism, a good starting point for a new beginning.

#### Lessons learned



When preparing the materials, the biggest challenge was how to prepare current content and how to carry out shootings despite all the restrictive measures: the director worked online, and the coordination of filming took place in the same way. The involvement of all stakeholders was also a big challenge (we organized video conferences with providers, addressed guests ...); we regularly monitored the corona situation and informed all stakeholders about it.

#### Results, achievements and recognitions

During the pandemic, visits to the destination website [www.dolina-soce.si](http://www.dolina-soce.si) were almost non-existent, so we approached our guests via social networks. The visit then gradually grew, along with the release of restrictions and the resumption of tourism – you can find out more in the attachment, which also shows the structure of visitors on the website. Usually, the visitors used to be mainly foreigners, however, this time Slovenians predominated. The same goes for destination visitors.

So, the target audience was addressed through the Soča Valley social media, on the destination Website and through the newsletter, which has around 2,000 subscribers. The film *Back to the Spring* was also promoted through the channels of the Slovenian Tourist Organization. It was very well-accepted and viewed by over 235,000 people. The 10 virtual sights in the Soča Valley has reached altogether 218,000 people, had 12,787 clicks and 10,306 reactions.

#### Additional references

##### Posts:

Back to the Spring: <https://youtu.be/-h8Y-KhVkwU> (Slovene),

[https://youtu.be/GiBjKNo\\_6EM](https://youtu.be/GiBjKNo_6EM) (English)

Virtual walk through the Soča valley: see attachment.

Moja Dolina Soče, the ambassadors playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0o0S0MdCkB63aG4k88FMFDOHENbQgOKN>

16 moments of silence:

<https://www.facebook.com/JulianAlpsSlovenia/videos/575905799706085/> (Slovene),

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=880190755819660> (English)

