



Press Release

Mr. Taleb Rifai, General Secretary UNWTO, hands out “Travelife Certified” awards to TUI Nederland, SNP Natuurreizen and Kuoni Specialists.

First awarded Tour operators on the basis of a GSTC Recognized standard

January 9, Amsterdam. In presence of the Dutch Royal Princess Laurentien - the first Travelife Certified awards were handed out by Mr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General of the UNWTO (UN-World Tourism Organisation) to the Dutch tour operators TUI Nederland, SNP Natuurreizen and Kuoni Specialists. The awards are a recognition for the long-term efforts and frontrunner position of these companies regarding sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility.

The awarded companies comply with more than 150 certification criteria, related to an operators' office management, product range, international business partners and customer information.

First GSTC recognised standard for tour operators

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) recently announced that the Travelife standard for Tour operators and Travel agents has achieved 'Recognized' certification status.

Rigorous review and authorization procedures have determined that Travelife's revised Tour operators and Travel agents standard is considered equivalent to the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria; the minimum requirement for tourism businesses worldwide. The GSTC is supported by the UN and is comparable with the FSC standard for wood and the MSC standard for sustainable fish.

Naut Kusters, Manager of Travelife for Tour operators and Travel agents said: *“I am delighted that the Travelife Certified standard for Tour operators and Travel Agents achieved GSTC Recognition. It will provide direction to committed tour operators and recognition for front runners. The standard is comprehensive and profound and has integrated leading global standards and guidelines for Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility”*.

With support from the EU Eco-innovation program, national trade associations in more than 15 countries already promote Travelife to their members. The Travelife training, reporting and planning tools are available in more than 10 languages.

Frank Oostdam, Director Dutch travel association ANVR: *“this is a valuable recognition of the leading position of ANVR with regard to sustainability. Since 2009 all ANVR members comply with the basic Travelife reporting and compliance standards. I am proud that, as first companies worldwide, three Dutch tour operators received certification based on a GSTC Recognized standard. They have set an example for companies worldwide”*.



Frank Oostdam, director ANVR; **Steven van der Heijden**, CEO TUI - Nederland; **Ellen Bulthuis**, Sustainability Manager, Kuoni Specialists; **Taleb Rifai**, Secretary General UNWTO; **Gert Nieuwboer**, Director SNP Naturreizen.

Editor Notes

Travelife for Tour operators en Travel agents

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European Union Eco-innovation program

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eco-innovation/>

Global Sustainable Tourism Council

www.gstcouncil.org

About Travelife (www.travelife.org)

Travelife is a certification system, dedicated to achieving sustainable practices within the tourism industry. It aims to provide companies with realistic sustainability goals, tools and solutions to implement positive change within their businesses and supply chains. The system is managed by ABTA – The Travel Association in the UK - and by ECEAT Projects - a not-for-profit organisation based in The Netherlands. Travelife has two key focuses:



Travelife Sustainability System for Tour operators and Travel agents: the system provides online training and practical tools for sustainability management and certification. The training and online tools are suitable for tour operators and travel agencies of any size and cover all management aspects of the travel company business including office operations, the supply chain, destinations and consumers. Upon submitting a report in compliance with the Travelife standard (based on an independent onsite audit), the company can obtain the “Travelife Certified” status. The Travelife standard for Tour operators and Travel agencies is based upon the full Corporate Social Responsibility themes, including labour conditions, human rights, environment, biodiversity and fair business practices. The management requirements are compatible with EMAS and ISO 14001. The system is supported by more than 15 national travel associations to further its implementation among members.

Travelife Sustainability System for Hotels and Accommodations: the certification system helps hotels and accommodations manage their social and environmental impacts and communicate their achievements to customers. The system provides an online sustainability checklist, based on European and International standards, to enable property managers to check their performance, gain advice and monitor progress. Once subscribed, properties undergo a third party audit to conduct a full environmental and social audit of their property and if they fulfil the criteria, properties may achieve Bronze, Silver or Gold awards, which can be displayed in brochures and on websites. To date nearly 17,000 properties have registered with the Travelife Sustainability System for hotels and accommodations, 1,500 have completed a full third party audit and more than 500 properties have achieved a Travelife award. The System is the only certification scheme that works in partnership with some of the largest tour operators in the world as well as smaller independents, who all use Travelife to manage their contracted hotels and accommodations.

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