

2014 Sustainable Destinations Global Top 100

Press Release

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Experts create the world's first green destinations Top 100

For the first time, a Sustainable Destinations Global Top 100 is launched today to celebrate the management efforts of the most sustainable destinations on Earth. The list is the result of open calls in the social media, followed by a selection by 30 international tourism sustainability experts. "The Global Top 100 aims to recognise tourism destinations that have worked hard to make a difference and take sustainability seriously", says director Albert Salman of GreenDestinations.info. "Nevertheless, no destination is sustainable for the full 100%." This is why the Top 100 present ratings of overall destination sustainability according to the only available global assessment tool for this purpose: the Global Sustainable Tourism Review, GSTR." Salman also stresses: "Carbon emission of travel has not been calculated by us. This is what we want to add next year. We recommend travellers to compensate their carbon emission".

The Top 100 is a joint initiative of four leading organisations in sustainable tourism, with Dr. Randy Durband, CEO of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, as a Special Advisor. "These 100 destinations stand out for making meaningful and measurable progress in their individual journeys toward greater sustainability," says Durband. "Measuring sustainability is not simple and straightforward. This list recognizes those destinations that are moving in the right direction according to the assessments of neutral experts utilizing objective criteria."

This Top 100 does not provide for a simple ranking from 1 to 100. Destinations can be ranked in different ways on the website www.greendestinations.info, for four different part of the world. The destination to be considered most sustainable overall is the Portuguese Azores archipelago, because it has the highest global sustainability score by GSTR: 8.9/10. The number of selected destinations for each continent reflects the relative size of international tourism to that continent. So the Top 100 includes 15 American destinations, because 15% of global tourism arrivals is in the Americas.

In addition to the GSTR rating, the website presents the scores given by Green Destinations Selection Panel members to destinations' performance on six key criteria: Nature, Environment, Culture & Tradition, Social well-being, Green Economy and certified Green Tourism Policy. The latter criterion, corresponding to certification using the GSTC destination criteria, is given the highest weight of all criteria. The Top 100 includes all certified destinations of QualityCoast, Biosphere, and EarthCheck.

GSTR: the global sustainability support & rating system

Many destinations of the Top 100 show GSTR-scores. GSTR provides a global index for destination sustainability, assessed through the GSTR database. GSTR reports on destinations from a client's point of view. So the Top 100 is compiled with input from clients, professionals and certifiers. The GSTR score takes the destinations' performance into account in ca. 50 fields, covering the same six criteria as the Top 100. It covers business efforts in the destinations, but does obviously not include the CO₂ emission of travel to the destination. Meanwhile, GSTR scores of an ever-expanding global collection of destinations will be updated on a monthly basis and published by GreenDestinations.info.

The Top 100 is an initiative of TravelMole.com, Vision on Sustainable Tourism, Totem Tourism and Green Destinations, all global players in the promotion of tourism sustainability and in informing professional stakeholders in the sector, as well as the media.

Valere Tjolle of Totem Tourism and VISION on Sustainable Tourism said: “We believe that sustainability is integral to both destination benefits and the healthy provision of quality holidays to visitors. Destination communities have more to gain (and lose) from sustainability in all its aspects – economic, cultural, social and environmental. The fact is that destinations have more ‘Skin in the Tourism Game’ than anyone and that is why we conceived, and are supporting this seminal project!”

More info: www.greendestinations.info | www.travelmole.com | www.totemtourism.com | www.tourism-vision.com

For further questions, please contact:

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