

Communication material no 1

“Sustainability is here to stay – let’s get started!”

Sustainable tourism is not a product, a niche, a market proposition or even a ‘form’ of tourism – all types of tourism can and shall be made more sustainable. The COVID crisis has opened a window of opportunity to foster change in the travel sector towards a more sustainable tourism. All actors in the tourism value chain, including travel agents and tour operators, have a vital role to play in this transformation. As intermediates between tourists and tourism businesses you can influence the choices of consumers, practices of suppliers and the development in destinations.

However, organisations in travel and tourism, in particular small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), that wish to take action frequently find it difficult to navigate the complex range of certification schemes, monitoring systems, funding opportunities, and tools in the sustainability ‘space’. This is why a number of ECTAA associations have decided to partner up with the SUSTOUR project to help their member companies get started into the world of sustainable practices and operations or to improve their sustainability performance if they have already gained a foothold in sustainable tourism.

What is SUSTOUR?

SUSTOUR is a project co-financed by the European Commission under the COSME programme with the objective to **foster sustainable practices among travel agents and tour operators**. It is supported by seven projects partners, notably ECEAT and Futouris as well as five associations of travel agents and tour operators at European and national levels: ECTAA (Europe), ANVR (NL), SMAL (FI), APAVT (PT) and UHPA (HR).

The most important objective is the development or updating of existing **standards, training** and (online) **implementation tools** to effectively implement sustainability within tour operators and their supply chain. Key focus areas will be the management of **carbon and plastics**, two of the key environmental impacts of the travel sector. Specific tools will be developed for the carbon management of (shore) **excursions**.

Moreover, the project will provide **free technical support** for travel agents and tour operators that want to improve their sustainability performance. A call for SME support will be launched later this year to offer interested travel agents and tour operators the opportunity to work towards [Travelife](#) certification, which is the leading training, management and certification scheme specifically designed for travel agents and tour operators and globally supported by the travel industry. The technical support will include training, one-on-one and group coaching to implement sustainability best practice, and Travelife certification. Companies can also apply for specific support packages related to carbon, plastic and / or supply chain management.

At the end of the project, it is expected that **175+ SMEs** will benefit from the wider direct financial support programme rolled out under this project. **120 tour operators** will be coached towards complying with 100+ best practices through onsite, group and distance coaching. Companies will develop detailed **sustainability reports**. Moreover, 120 tour operators will obtain the basic **Travelife Partner award** and 60 tour operators will receive the **Travelife Certified** award. You can be one of the companies to benefit from this support programme.

For more information, please visit the SUSTOUR project [website](#) or consult the project summary [leaflet](#) available on the website. The announcement of the call for SME support will be communicated shortly and information will be available on the website of SUSTOUR. If you are interested, you can already register yourself at the SUSTOUR website to receive updates on the call for SME support: travelife.info/cosme.

The logo for SUSTOUR, featuring the word "SUSTOUR" in a bold, teal, sans-serif font with a slight shadow effect.

Co-funded by the COSME programme
of the European Union