

PRESS RELEASE

629 travel companies signed up for sustainability training and/or certification programme

Brussels, 5 July 2022. **629 tour operators and travel agents have been selected to participate in the SUSTOUR technical support programme financed under the EU COSME programme to improve their sustainability performance**

A call for SME applications has been launched beginning of March 2022 to select a minimum of 175 tour operators and travel agents that will benefit from a comprehensive technical support programme to help them improve their sustainability performance. More than 730 applications have been received and after evaluation by an independent evaluation committee, 629 SMEs from 35 countries have been selected and signed up to the support programme.

Said Naut Kusters, Director of ECEAT and lead of the SUSTOUR project: "We are delighted to see so much interest from tour operators and travel agents across Europe to learn how to make their business and supply chain more sustainable. We have decided to accept three times more companies in the support programme than initially planned, to allow a maximum of companies to benefit from the project."

The technical support programme will start as from July 2022 and will provide a mix of innovative online trainings, multi-day classroom trainings, intensive coaching (group and individual) as well as peer-to-peer learning – all provided and guided by selected sustainable tourism experts. Companies have been given the choice between obtaining support towards Travelife certification or support in terms of improving specific areas, such as carbon, plastic and supply chain management or certification of their shore excursions.

Various events will be organised in conjunction with European trade fairs to allow the selected travel companies to exchange experiences and best practices and to award those companies who successfully reach certification through the SUSTOUR project.

The list of the successful travel companies enrolled in the SUSTOUR technical support programme are available from the following website: <https://www.travelife.info/sustour/index.php?menu=call-for-smes>

SUSTOUR is an EU-funded COSME project the aim of which is to further develop tools and standards to help tour operators and travel agents improve their sustainability performance. It also provides a budget of nearly 600.000€ to roll out an extensive training and certification support scheme for tour operators and travel agents.

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