



Global Leaders Network

The professionals' network shaping
a sustainable future
for tourism destinations and businesses

Introduction

Progress in sustainable tourism depends on leadership and innovation. With this in mind, Green Destinations starts a Global Leaders initiative for destination and businesses leaders as an exclusive platform for cooperation, mutual learning, sharing experience and improvement. Global Leader Members and Partners will be at the forefront of innovation in developing tourism, in managing tourism impacts, enhancing benefits, quality and sustainability of their tourism offer. The initiative will also enable destinations to monitor progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The Global Leaders initiative has been registered as a Voluntary Partnership for the Sustainable Development Goals. Global Leaders can refer to this Voluntary Commitment and to the SDG-logo.

Goals

- **Learn** from other leaders in sustainable tourism;
- **Enhance** your benefits from tourism and reduce its impacts on sustainability;
- **Gain Recognition** as a sustainable country, region, destination or business at global platforms;
- **Gain visibility** for responsible businesses, products and services in the market place.

The initiative is especially developed for professionals promoting sustainability beyond certification.

The Network

Global Leaders are people: political, management, business, academic, media, and civil society leaders, who are actively connecting and representing the Partners to the network:

- **Destinations:** countries, regions, tourism hotspots and protected areas;
- **Companies** dedicated to advancing tourism sustainability;
- **Organizations and independent professionals** in sustainable tourism.

The network will be a place for people to connect, discuss challenges, and learn how to embed best practices into their policies, marketing and day-to-day management; and to openly but safely discuss solutions to emerging problems with trusted colleagues.

Programs, Activities and Working groups

The following opportunities are proposed for exclusive networking and cooperation:

Program 1. Networking and exchange of experience

- A. Access to Global Leaders conferences and working groups.
- B. Good Practice exchange, match-making and support.

Read more on page 5.

Program 2. Enhancing Benefits and Sustainability

- A. Assessment of Tourism Impacts and Opportunities.
- B. Training & Capacity Building.
- C. Global Recognition of Sustainability.
- D. Enhancing Tourism Benefits and Reducing Impacts.
Country framework programs.
Spreading and extending tourism in space and time.
Carbon & Climate.

Read more on page 6.

Program 3. Promotion and Marketing

- A. Global Leaders and UN SDGs logo use.
- B. Global Leaders promotion and marketing strategy.
- C. Miami: promotion of responsible offer and services.

Read more on page 10.

As a Global Leaders Partner you will be free to decide in which working group(s) you participate. We can help you in estimating the resources required to work effectively in a working group.

Why join? Benefits of participation

As a network member you will benefit from:

- **Learning from other Global Leaders**, taking advantage of their success stories and good practices through professionally facilitated forums and events, and through direct match-making by Green Destinations.
- Free participation in the Global Leaders events connected to **Global Green Destinations Days** and **ITB Berlin**. Participation in any of the **thematic working groups**.
- Common development of strategies **enhancing benefits and reducing impacts from tourism**: how to extend tourism over space and time, and how to meet the Carbon & Climate challenge.
- Access to **online tools for action planning**, assessment, training, monitoring, and reporting. This platform offers possibilities to participate in the GSTC-Accredited Green Destinations Certification & Awards Program.
- Gaining **independent recognition** of your progress towards the UN SDGs and through Awards schemes.

Countries and regions will get first-hand insight from excellent approaches (such as Slovenia), as well as tools and guidance to implement new strategies.

Single destinations will find added value beyond certification programs.

Tourism professionals and businesses will learn from good practices and find opportunities to disseminate their expertise to a network of professionals.

Overview of Programs

***Brief overview of the Global Leaders programs.** Standard Benefits are provided to any Member or Partner. Optional Benefits can be added depending on ambitions and preferences of Partners, to be agreed between the Partner and Green Destinations, resulting into a in tailor-made work program.*

	1. Networking and exchange of experiences	2. Enhancing Benefits and Sustainability	3. Promotion and Marketing
Standard Benefits	1A. Global Leaders conferences and thematic working groups	2A. Tourism Impacts and Opportunities 2B. Training & Capacity Building	3A. Logo use: GD Global Leaders UN SDGs
Optional Benefits	1B. Good practice exchange, match- making and support	2C. Global Recognition 2D. Enhance Benefits, Reduce Impacts: Country framework programs Extending tourism in space and time Carbon & Climate	3B. Green Leaders Publicity Strategy 3C. Miami: promotion of responsible offer and services

Program 1. Networking and exchange of experiences

1A. Global Leaders Conferences and Working groups

The founding conference will be hosted by the Dutch Province of Gelderland and will take place 25-26 September 2018 in the Seat of the Province in Arnhem. Venues of future Network conferences are subject to expressions of interest by Global Leader Partners. Participation in conferences is restricted to Partners and to destination and business leaders who are interested to join the Network.

The first Global Leaders Conference will be the opening event of **Global Green Destinations Days** (25-28 Sept. 2018), which also includes a conference, working sessions and field trips focusing on good practice exchange between destination and business representatives.

The Global Green Destinations Days (GGDD) provide a unique opportunity to learn from others, by exchanging good practices and success stories. You will meet other Global Leaders, Top 100 destinations and Green Destinations Ambassadors at the annual Global Green Destinations Days, and you will no doubt engage in a continued exchange in thematic groups around topical issues. The priority topics for networking will be decided by the Global Leaders at the annual conferences.

The Global Leaders Conference will be restricted to Network Members and invited professionals, and subject to Chatham House rules. This is the place to discuss solutions to emerging problems openly but safely with colleagues whom you trust and with whom you can develop cooperation after the meetings.

The 2018 Conference will serve as a catalyst to:

- Review members' interest in taking advantage from suggested Working groups;
- Conclude on a Founding Declaration of the Network;
- Identify priority challenges of the Network partners in sustainable tourism development.

Every Network Partner can delegate a number of representatives to Global Leaders conferences.

Partners may agree to organize online or onsite meetings to cooperate throughout the year.

1B. Good practice exchange, match-making and support

The most important principle of developing a Global Leaders Network is that members and partners can enjoy major benefits if they have a proper understanding of each other's position and challenges, and if they take the time to learn from each other. Green Destinations and the Associate Partners of the network will play an active role in identifying (especially before and during the annual conference):

- Your main concerns and needs in terms of solutions and support.
- Your objectives re: sustainability assessment and recognition (Top 100, SDGs).

- Training & capacity building needs among your staff re: tourism sustainability.
- Developing a country framework program.
- Better spreading tourism over space and time.
- Meeting the Carbon & Climate challenge.
- Joining a Global Leaders Publicity strategy.
- Participating in a Miami pilot to identify and promote your responsible offer and services.

By bringing partners together around important topics, Green Destinations aims to encourage matchmaking during conferences and follow-up networking, but we will also actively undertake match-making efforts, and invite specific experts to support the necessary innovation process.

Program 2. Enhancing Benefits and Sustainability

Activities in this program are aimed at enhancing your sustainability, recognition and recognition of your sustainability efforts, and other benefits; and as reducing impacts related to Overtourism and Climate change.

2A. Assessment of Tourism Impacts and Opportunities

Countries, regions and pilot destinations can work on the Green Destinations online platform, and start a Tourism Impact Assessment or a Baseline Sustainability Assessment. The following activities and working groups are proposed:

Tourism Impact Assessment

An important initial activity for all destinations and businesses is to make a Tourism Impact Assessment (TIA): an interactive assessment of the impacts of your tourism development to (a) the key assets of your own destination, and (b) international sustainability and climate. For destinations, a TIA is a very important first step of a Baseline Sustainability Assessment (next).

Baseline Sustainability Assessment

For destinations, the first year's assessment for the **Green Destinations Awards & Certification program** is called a Baseline Sustainability Assessment. It is an interactive, third-party validated self-assessment of adherence with the GSTC-Recognized Green Destinations Standard. Relevant aspects include:

- The Assessment can be made at any geographical level (country, region, province, city or island).
- The Assessment is facilitated through complimentary access to the GD online platform for assessment, monitoring and reporting.
- As a Partner region or country, you may request additional platform logins for pilot destinations in your region or country, also allowing them to strengthen their destination management through action planning, self-assessment, training, monitoring, and reporting. Depending upon the

assessment results, this may lead to **Green Destinations or QualityCoast Awards** and to selection into the **Sustainable Destinations Global Top 100**.

- Technical coaching will be provided by a Green Destinations expert.
- Once the assessment is completed, Green Destinations will provide an independent expert to validate the results, and to provide recommendations for improvements and progress towards the Green Destinations Standard and towards the Global Goals.
- The validated assessment results are considered the “baseline” in the monitoring of progress in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, with a two-year frequency.

2B. Training & Capacity Building

Green Destinations and an international team of trainers in the field of tourism sustainability invite destination managers and professionals, participants from the tourism business sector, and destination management experts to participate in live and online training courses for destinations and businesses.

The Training course prepares participants for the essential function of destination sustainability coordinator or advisor. In GSTC-Accredited certification programs destination management bodies must have a trained Destination Sustainability Coordinator in their team.

General Topics of the Training include:

- The global picture. The relationship between the GSTC and Green Destinations.
- How to make progress, and how to become a Sustainable Destination.
- How to become a qualified Destination Sustainability Coordinator.
- The role of the business sector in developing sustainable tourism.
- Marketing benefits of destination sustainability.
- Sustainable Destinations Top 100 and the Best of Top 100 Awards at ITB Berlin.

The first new-style **Sustainable Destinations Training Course** was held in Korea (19-22 June 2018), hosted and sponsored by the city of Incheon and FEE-Korea.

Global Leaders are encouraged to host similar live training courses.

An Online-Only Auditors Training Course will start in Oct-Nov. 2018.

Green Destinations will advise Global Leader Business partners re: sustainability trainings on relevant subjects. Business partners are encouraged to host live training courses.

2C. Global Recognition of Sustainability

Sustainable Top 100 and Green Destinations Awards

Destinations and small regions are encouraged to start with a focus on the criteria of the **Sustainable Destinations Global Top 100**, participate in the competition, and to benefit from our fast-track technical support to potential selection in the Top 100, and the **ITB Berlin Awards podium**.

Destinations that have completed the Baseline Sustainability Assessment (Program 1A) are encouraged to prepare a work program aimed at:

- advancing the Green Destination Standard;
- **QualityCoast and Green Destinations Awards**;
- **GSTC-Accredited Green Destinations certification**.

Awarded and certified destinations will also be selected for inclusion in the Sustainable Top 100, and as finalists for the for the **ITB Best of Top 100 Awards** ([see here the 2018 Edition](#)).

Advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Partners interested in independent recognition of their progress to the UN Global Goals can be supported in identifying relevant contributions.

Dossiers documenting contributions can be validated by an independent expert, as part of the Global Leaders program.

Any specific Sustainable Development Goals can be selected by Partners.

Excellent communication opportunities exist for Partners throughout the year connected to milestones in their performance and in particular during ITB Berlin.

Destinations recognized for sustainability can take advantage of Program 3.

2E. Enhancing Tourism Benefits and Reducing Impacts

Country framework programs

Countries and regions are encouraged to consider the example of Slovenia, and to build a framework program for sustainable destinations and businesses. The Slovenian Tourism Board and the Slovenian Institute for Sustainable Tourism



(GoodPlace) will present the Slovenia Green Scheme and analyze the potential benefits of such an approach in relation to your ambitions.

Spreading and extending tourism in space and time

Within the Network, a number of partner destinations and countries will closely work together to develop effective approaches in two ways:

- more evenly spread and extend incoming tourism in a larger part of the country, in order to (1) more equally distribute the economic benefits of tourism to a larger number of destinations and regions; and (2) to avoid any potential pressures in the most popular cities and tourism hotspots; Global Leader Partners are strongly committed to avoid any trends towards overtourism;
- more evenly spread and extend incoming tourism over a larger part of the year, in order to restrict the social economic disadvantages brought by seasonality.

Solutions to be considered under this topic of extending tourism in space and time are typically tailor-made and cannot all be learned from schoolbook approaches. Therefore, partners working on this topic will focus on learning from each other's experience, and they will commonly develop ways to learn from third-party experiences outside the Network.

Carbon & Climate

Introduction. An increasing number of destinations are formulating ambitions to switch completely to renewable energy sources or to become *carbon neutral* within the next decades. It is very interesting to learn from these cases, but also to address the broader range of climate-related challenges related to tourism. Expert support in this incubator program will be provided by the Centre for Sustainability, Tourism & Transport (CSTT) of NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands.

Global Leader activities. Interested Global Leaders (from destinations and businesses) will work together in their efforts how to address challenges most relevant to them; this may cover any of the following elements of the Green Destinations Standard:

Responding to climate risks. Climate change requires adaptation, based upon an identification of risks and opportunities, enhancing the resilience of the destination, addressing siting, design, and management of facilities, not least to control heat and water stress.

Reducing fossil fuel dependency. A plethora of measures exists to reduce energy consumption as well as to deploy renewable energy technologies.

Travel & Climate. The destination has a strategy aimed at measuring and minimising the carbon footprint connected to the travel of its visitors (both within and to the destination).

Energy consumption monitoring. Measures are taken to reduce energy consumption in the destination; residents and visitors are encouraged to reduce energy consumption without compromising service or safety.

Climate change information. Residents, tourism enterprises and visitors are informed about how the destination is coping with climate change and what it does to reduce its own impact and the impact of its visitors, in an appropriate way.

Carbon compensation. The destination considers the carbon footprint related to the travel of its visitors, and promotes appropriate measures, aimed at an effective carbon compensation through reducing greenhouse gas emissions globally, for instance by buying carbon credits from emissions trading systems.

Program 3. Promotion and Marketing

3A. Global Leaders and UN SDGs logo use

Once you join the Network as a Member or Partner, you will be allowed to use the Global Leaders logo.

When you participate in the independent validation of your contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (the “Global Goals”) as part of program 2C, you will be encouraged to use the logo of the UN SDGs.

3B. Global Leaders promotion and marketing strategy

Global Leaders can request Green Destinations to help explore ways to better benefit from your sustainability achievements in marketing and promotion, since “sustainable” is not always the magic word in the travel market.

Green Destinations can support your promotion and marketing objectives through tailor-made advice and inclusion in our social media strategy, positioning Partner destinations as **the responsible or “green” option** in relevant market segments. Obviously, this should be supported with clear evidence. A first effort in this direction is the Miami initiative.

3C. Miami: promotion of responsible offer and services

Starting from July 2018, Global Leader Partners are offered priority in developing pilot applications in Miami. Miami is an initiative of Green Destinations and the International Institute for Animal Ethics (IIAE) aimed at creating a global portal for destinations and businesses to help visualize and market their “green” quality and sustainability to travelers (B2C), businesses (B2B) and governments (B2G). Miami is not limited to animal related issues, but to the full range of sustainability topics.

Miami will create maps for different target audiences:

In **Government maps** for municipalities, regions, countries or protected areas, our data will work for you. Our map will show you where to improve, what to develop, and how satisfied your residents and holidaymakers are. Information services can be delivered at any possible timescale, from (near) real-time to annual. You can use this to strengthen your economy, storytelling and branding.

On the **Business platform**, companies and organizations will be able to tell their story, offer, sell, learn, share, compare, and make deals with like-minded businesses (globally).

In **Open data maps**, national and international travelers will discover the information and stories of destinations and businesses. Everybody will be able to follow your progress in quality and sustainability.

On the **Booking platform**, consumers can get informed, and directly buy products and services with you.

More information on Viami can be found [here](#).

Background and management of the initiative

The Global Leaders Network is a program of Green Destinations. It is the result of the *Global Destination Leaders* initiative that was taken in the context of the Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 by three co-founders:

- Albert Salman, founder of Green Destinations and Sustainable Destinations Top 100 Awards.
- Brian T. Mullis, founder of Sustainable Travel International (STI); Director, Guyana Tourism Authority.
- Costas D. Christ, Editor of National Geographic, Founder of the National Geographic World Legacy Awards, and Beyond Green Travel.

on behalf of Green Destinations, the program is managed:

- Albert Salman, overall program director, manager of programs 1, 2C and 2D, 3A and 3B;
- Marloes Van de Goor, manager of Viami (3C);
- Hugo de Jong, manager of programs 2A, 2B, and the GD certification program (part of 2C).

The development of the program will be supervised by a Global Leaders Committee consisting of the Program managers and Partners' Representatives. By involving Partners in the Committee, we hope to ensure that Partners' interests will be taken into account, and that expectations are met.

More information

Green Destinations <http://greendestinations.org>.

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