



Global Leaders Network

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

Version 2.7, December 2018



Introduction

Progress in sustainable tourism depends on leadership and innovation. With this in mind, Green Destinations Foundation has launched a network for destination and businesses leaders as an exclusive platform for cooperation, mutual learning, sharing experience and improvement. The Founding Declaration has been signed by the fifty invited experts at the first Global Leaders Conference, 25-26 September 2018 in the Dutch city of Arnhem, hosted by the Province of Gelderland. The Global Leader Members and Partners are committed to 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 (SDGs).

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 is 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

Until the end of 2019 the Global Leaders program will focus on a limited number of SDGs:



Focus on SDGs: [8+11] and [7+13]

- **Sustainable cities and communities** (SDG 11), in combination with enhancing local employment and local economic benefits from tourism beyond the current hotspots and season (SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth).
- **Climate action** (SDG 13), in combination with enhancing Clean energy (part of SDG 7).

For these goals, the following opportunities are offered 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.

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Program 2. Enhancing Tourism Sustainability and Benefits

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

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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.

More on page 11.

As a Global Leaders Network member 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 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 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 Global Leaders founding conference, hosted by the Dutch Province of Gelderland in September 2018, was the first of an annual series. 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 was the opening event of the third **Global Green Destinations Days** (25-28 Sept. 2018), which included several conferences, 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 is decided by the Global Leaders at the annual conferences.

The Global Leaders Conference will remain 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.

A brief report of the 2018 Conference is available in the Green Destinations website. The event served as a catalyst to review members' interest in taking advantage from suggested Working groups; and to identify priority challenges of the Network partners in sustainable tourism development.

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

Online or onsite meetings will be hosted by members to facilitate cooperation 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 and extending 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 Sustainability and Benefits

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 offered:

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 (June 2018), hosted and sponsored by the city of Incheon and FEE-Korea and with the support of four GSTC-trainers. Every year two training courses will be offered: a classroom training for destination managers , and an online training for auditor advisers.

Green Destinations will advise Global Leader Business partners re: sustainability trainings.

2C. Global Recognition of Sustainability

Sustainable Top 100 and Green Destinations Awards

Destinations in Global Leaders countries and regions are encouraged to participate in the **Sustainable Destinations Global Top 100** competition, and in this way to gain experience with the Green Destinations Standard. Global Leaders can request technical support for participation in the Top 100, which is a fast-track towards the **ITB Berlin Awards podium**: only Top 100 destinations are eligible for the **Best of Top 100 Awards at ITB**, the destination award series at the world's leading travel trade show. [See here the results of the 2018 Awards Edition at ITB.](#)

After two years of free participation in the competition (for Europe this is one year) destinations can only maintain their position in the Top 100 through participation in the Green Destinations Certification and Awards program, by completing a Baseline Sustainability Assessment (Program 1A). This assessment is your first major step towards:

- advancing sustainability and quality of the destination;
- **QualityCoast and Green Destinations Awards**;
- **GSTC-Accredited Green Destinations certification.**

Awarded and certified destinations will remain eligible for the Top 100 and the Best of Top 100 Awards at ITB.

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 towards particular SDGs can be validated by independent experts who will be appointed by the program management.

Any specific Sustainable Development Goals can be selected by Partners.

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.

Excellent communication opportunities exist throughout the year connected to milestones in your performance and in particular during ITB Berlin. Destinations recognized for sustainability can take advantage of Program 3.



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) are prepared to clarify the **Slovenia Green Scheme** and analyze the potential benefits of such an approach in relation to your ambitions.



Slovenia Green is a national framework program focusing on the development of sustainable tourism at all levels in the country. The program has adopted the Green Destinations Standard adding national specifics and indicators. Experiences from the Slovenia Green scheme can be used by other countries and regions to efficiently develop their own framework programs for the development and management of sustainable tourism at all levels. Partners of the Global Leaders Network will be eligible to support when developing similar framework programs based upon Green Destinations Standard and the Slovenia Green model.

2E. Enhancing Tourism Benefits and Reducing Impacts

Spreading and extending tourism in space and time

Within the Network, a number of partner destinations and countries 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 focus on learning from each other's experience, and they commonly develop ways to learn from third-party experiences outside the Network.

Meeting the Carbon & Climate challenge

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 are 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.

Global Leader Partners are be encouraged invited to actively participate in the Sustainable Top 100 competition, and to nominate success stories for the **ITB Best of Top 100 Awards** ([see here the 2018 Edition](#)).

Partners will be asked for their interest in staging a Success Story presentations session at ITB Berlin 2019 involving Global Leaders and ITB Award winners.

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. Promotion of responsible offer and services

Global Leader Partners are offered priority in developing pilot applications in Miami, an initiative aimed at creating a global portal for destinations and businesses to help visualize and market their “green” quality and sustainability.

Background and management of the initiative

The Global Leaders Network is a program of Green Destinations Foundation. It results from the *Global Destination Leaders* initiative that was taken in the Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 by Albert Salman, founder of Green Destinations and Sustainable Top 100 Awards, Brian T. Mullis, founder of Sustainable Travel International (STI); now Director, Guyana Tourism Authority, and Costas D. Christ, Editor of National Geographic.

On behalf of Green Destinations, the program is managed by:

- Albert Salman, overall program management and programs 1, 2C, 2D and 3;
- Hugo de Jong, manager of programs 2A, 2B, and GD Awards & certification program (2C).

The development of the program will be supported by a Global Leaders Experts Committee consisting of Partners’ Representatives and external experts.

More information

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

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