



# Work Program 2019-2020

The Professionals' Community shaping  
a sustainable future  
for tourism destinations and businesses

Version 2.14, August 2019



## Introduction

Finding your way towards sustainable tourism is not easy as appears from the variety of issues exposed in the media. Among them, the most urgent include: overtourism, carbon & climate, and plastic. When preparing for improvement or certification you realize the need of a more sophisticated Roadmap ensuring progress based upon leadership, mutual learning and innovation. The Global Leaders Program offers destination and business leaders an exclusive platform for cooperation, sharing, learning and improvement. And it offers Tourism Boards the tools for a successful “green branding” based upon the “Slovenia Green” model. Global Leaders 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 program will enable destinations to embark on a Roadmap towards the UN SDGs of Agenda 2030.

**The Global Leaders Network was founded by 50 invited experts at the first Global Leaders Conference, 25-26 September 2018 in the Dutch city of Arnhem, hosted by the Provincial Government of Gelderland and attended a.o. by the National Tourism Boards of The Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Guyana and by Ecotourism Australia. Through this program Green Destinations is preparing and implementing work programs in a series of countries through bilateral cooperation.**

## 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

The Program is implemented by the Global Leaders Network, consisting of

- The **Community** (*the Global Leaders are people!*): political, management, business, academic, media, and civil society leaders, who are connecting and representing the Global Leaders Network Members, Observers and Associate Partners;

- **Member and Observer Destinations:** National Tourism Board or Ministries, regions, tourism hotspots and protected areas; Member destinations pay a fee covering services provided to them;
- **Member and Observer Companies** dedicated to advancing tourism sustainability;
- **Associate Partners:** organizations and independent professionals who serve as preferred service providers.

Community meetings are places to connect, discuss challenges, and learn how to embed best practices into their policies, marketing and day-to-day destination management (**DM**); and to openly but safely discuss solutions to emerging problems with trusted colleagues.

## Programs and Networking Activities

The Global Leaders program will focus on a variety of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), that are all interlinked with the criteria of the Green Destinations Standard.

Each participating destination or company will focus on the SDGs that they have prioritized for their own Sustainable Tourism Roadmap and for their Agenda 2030 goals.



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

# Why join? Benefits of participation

## Everybody 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.
- Free participation in the Global Leaders events connected to **Global Green Destinations Days** and **ITB Berlin**. Participation in any of the **thematic activities**.
- Development of strategies **enhancing benefits** and reducing impacts and hidden costs from tourism.
- 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 SDGs and through Awards schemes.

## For countries, states or regions:

- Through the Global Leaders Program we offer you a framework to develop a sophisticated roadmap ensuring progress based upon leadership, mutual learning and innovation.
- We offer you first-hand insight from world-leading Country framework programs such as Slovenia Green (developed by the Slovenian Tourism Board), as well as tools and guidance to implement new strategies. We offer the exclusive opportunity to National Tourism Boards and Ministries of Tourism to receive tailor-made support to create their own Country framework program to include their destinations and business sector in a high-profile green branding of the country as a whole. (Program 2D).

## For destinations:

- Assessment of Tourism Impacts and Opportunities (Program 2A).
- Training & Capacity Building (Program 2B).
- Global Recognition of Sustainability (Program 2C): Sustainable Top 100, the GSTC-Accredited Green Destinations Certification Program, incl. benchmark Awards (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum), which for destinations have equal marketing value to “certified”.

## For your tour operators and travel agents:

Third party certification programs, including the **GSTC-Accredited Travelife system**, which can be operated through our country representatives.

## For your accommodations and service providers:

Depending on your priorities we will propose the best possible option(s) in appropriate price categories in consultation with our representatives. However, our proposition is to first embark on our new **Green Travel Guide** program, which we are currently developing as a low-threshold entry for the entire tourism business sector in making progress in sustainability (which may include a process towards accommodation certification) and contributing to your quality tourism offer and regional development.

## For your sustainable tourism promotion:

We recommend you to join our new **Green Travel Guide** initiative, which can offer a customized platform for state-wide, destination and tourism business promotion of your green offer.

## For your tourism professionals:

We offer sustainable tourism experts (incl. organisations and consultancies) in Global Leader countries the opportunity to be involved in implementing the Green Destinations programs. After a brief training, experts or bodies can become GD Preferred Partners, GD Representatives or GD Auditors.

## For innovative green businesses:

Innovative green solution providers are invited to join Green Destinations' **Green Solutions Platform**, a 'green market place' that provides destinations and their business sector with solutions to their sustainability challenges.

## One-stop shop for All

The above listing of benefits illustrates that we provide the full range of options to support any countrywide or regional green travel program, together with our **Partners** and the **Green Solutions Platform**.

## Program 1. Networking and exchange of experiences

### 1A. Global Leaders Conferences and Activities

As a follow-up to the Global Leaders Conference in September 2018, our dedicated meetings program offers exclusive opportunities for the Global Leaders Community. All meetings are hosted and facilitated by Global Leader Partners. Participation in conferences is restricted to Partners and to destination and business leaders who are interested to join the program.

The first Global Leaders Conference in Arnhem, Gelderland (NL) was the opening event of the third **Global Green Destinations Days** (25-28 Sept. 2018), which included several conference days with 25 workshops, training sessions and field trips focusing on good practice exchange between destination and business representatives.

The annual Green Destinations Conferences provide the world's leading opportunity to learn from others, by exchanging good practices and success stories. You will meet other Global Leaders, Top 100 destinations and Green Destinations Partners and Ambassadors, 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 meetings are the best possible place to discuss solutions to emerging problems openly but safely with colleagues whom you trust and with whom you may 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.

## The 2019 Global Leaders meetings program

The preliminary program is as follows, more events will be added during the year:

- **ITB Berlin:** Global Leaders Reception to congratulate the 2019 ITB Award Winners, March 6
- **ITB Berlin:** 2019 Work planning meeting, March 7
- **Slovenia Green Day** and study visits involving Global Leaders, Ljubljana, May 22-24
- **Taiwan:** Workshop and study visit in Sun Moon Lake National Scenic Area, June 18-20
- **The Netherlands:** Destination management (DM) Study visit to various Green Destinations, July 8-10
- **Portugal:** Advanced Green Destinations training workshop, Sintra, July 23-24
- **Croatia: Global Green Destinations Days 2019, Zagreb-Mali Losinj, Oct 8-12**
  - DM Training session and crash course for GD Auditor-Advisors, Zagreb, Croatia, Oct 8
  - Global Leaders Reception and Dinner meeting, Zagreb, Croatia, Oct 8
  - Global Leaders Presentations and Panel sessions, GGDD19, Zagreb, Croatia, Oct 9
  - DM presentations, panel sessions and field visit, Mali Losinj, Croatia, Oct 10-11
  - Field visit to **Plitvice Lakes National Park**, Croatia, Oct 12
  - Opportunities to **visit Kvarner, Dubrovnik, Ljubljana, Slovenia**, Oct 12-13
- **Azores:** Global Leaders panel session at the **GSTC 2019 Conference**, Terceira, Dec 5-6
- **Bhutan: Litter and Waste Management Seminar**, Dec. (dates tbc)
- **ITB Berlin:** Global Leaders Reception to congratulate the 2020 ITB Award Winners, March 4.

Delegates from Global Leaders Members are eligible for participation without payment of any registration fees (except for the GSTC 2019 Conference).

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

The most important principle of developing a Global Leaders Program 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.
- Participating in a Green Travel Guide pilot to identify and promote your responsible offer to travelers.

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.

Training courses prepares participants for the essential function of a sustainable tourism 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.

Green Destinations has developed a new-style classroom **Sustainable Destinations Training Course** for Destination Managers that was already given in Korea (2018) and in Portugal (2019), and an online training for Auditor-Advisers.

## 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.**



**ITB**  
BERLIN



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.



## 2D. 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

### Litter and Waste management

Tourism Council Bhutan has asked the Global Leaders Network to give special attention to Litter and Waste management since this is a serious issue not only in Bhutan but also in many other countries. Areas of special

concern are (a) street litter and (b) the ever increasing of the use of plastics that end up in the environment, not seldom in our rivers and oceans. We will commit to this subject in three ways:

- Engaging into a strategic cooperation with the global organization **Make Sense**, and especially their program **Future of Waste**, a multi-stakeholder community of waste passionate taking concrete action around the world for better waste management, in cooperation. Future of Waste is supported by SUEZ. We have approached Future of Waste and their initial feedback is positive.
- Exploring the interest in a presentation, workshop of panel on waste and litter in the Green Destinations 2019 Conference, 9-11 October in Croatia. The conference is hosted by the Croatian Ministry of Tourism and the Island of Mali Losinj.
- Exploring the interest in an International Seminar on Litter and Waste Management in Bhutan, hosted by Tourism Council Bhutan, and in cooperation with Make Sense - Future of Waste and the Green Destinations and Global Leaders Community in Asia.

## Avoiding Overtourism: Spreading 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. "Spreading tourism in space and time" is one of the most important topics of the **Global Green Destinations Days (GGDD) 2019** in Croatia.

## Meeting the Carbon & Climate challenge

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 Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUAS/NHTV), The Netherlands. 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.

## “Greening the destination”

The most concrete and visible way of becoming a Green Destination is to increase the amount and the quality of “green zones” like trees, city parks, mixed forests and nature areas. Research indicates that a policy of “greening the destination” is likely to have a wide range of benefits including:

- health, e.g. by improved air quality, improved protection against sun, heat stress reduction and even general stress reduction
- effective increase of healthy recreation and leisure area
- effective carbon sequestration
- improved water management (more rainwater is kept in the soil)
- improved biodiversity and scenic value
- improved reduction of traffic noise
- for individual shops in green zones: positive impacts on consumer purchase behaviour.

All destinations are encouraged to prepare an implement a “Greening the destination” policy and work program. Global Leaders will seek cooperation to exchange experience and to avoid mistakes.

## Program 3. Promotion and Marketing

### 3A. Global Leaders and UN SDGs logo use

Once you join the Program 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

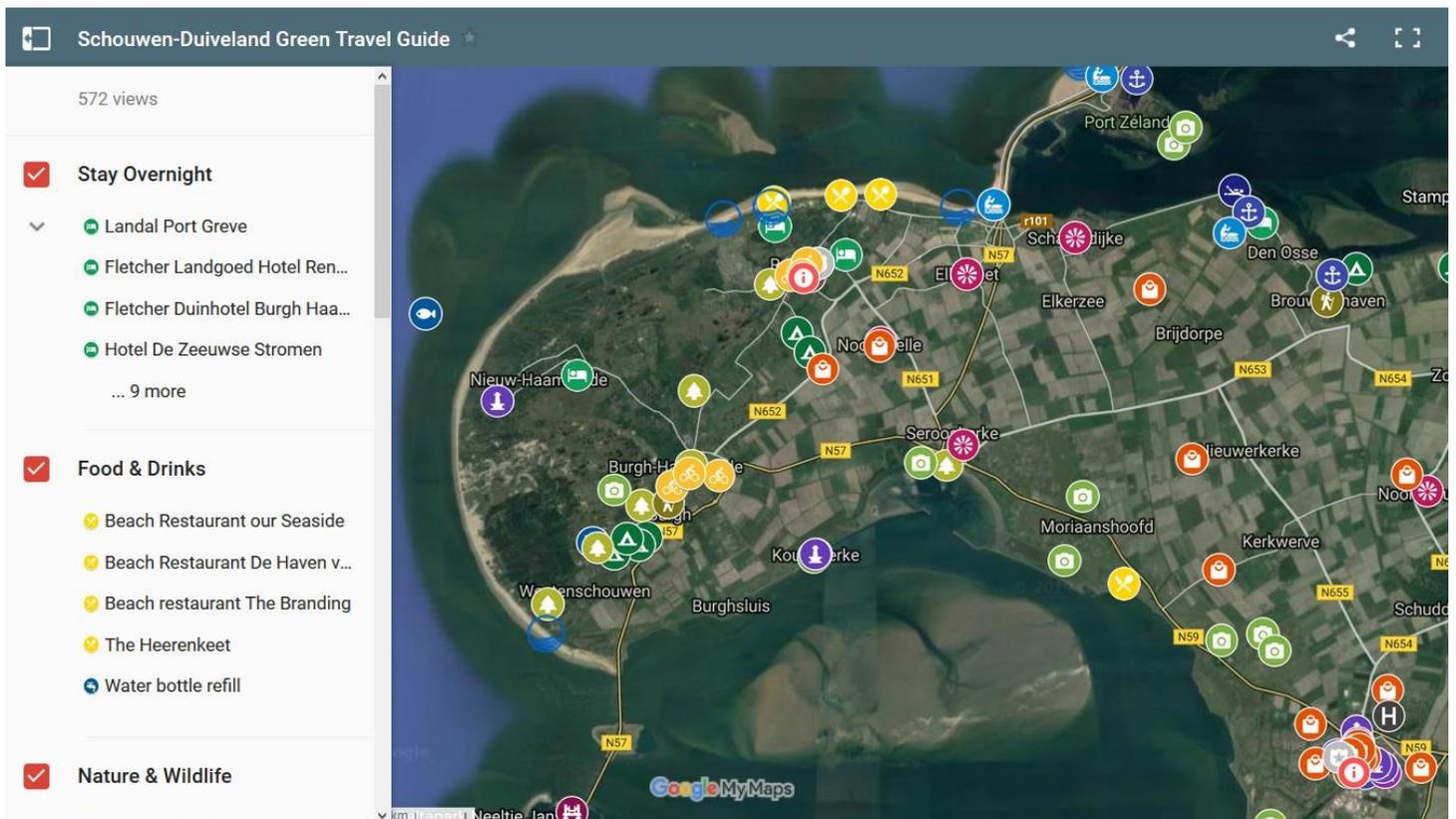
Global Leaders can request Green Destinations to help explore ways to better benefit from your sustainability achievements in marketing and promotion, since “sustainable” is not always the magic word in the travel market.

Global Leader Destinations are encouraged to participate in the Sustainable Top 100 competition as a first step of the GD Awards & Certification Program. Partner Destinations and businesses are encouraged to present successful Sustainable Tourism Stories at the annual Green Destinations Conferences (Croatia, 9-11 Oct) to qualify for the **Sustainable Top 100 Awards at ITB 2020 (2018 ITB Awards, 2019 ITB Awards)**.

Green Destinations can support your promotion and marketing objectives through our programs, cooperation with business sector partners and social media, positioning Partner destinations as **the responsible or “green” option** in relevant market segments. Obviously, it is key to support this claim with clear evidence. A first effort in this direction is the Green Travel Guide initiative.

## 3C. Green Travel Guide and Map

In the framework of the Global Leaders Program, the **Green Travel Guide** concept is developed as a tool to strengthen sustainable regional development and green promotion. Since early 2019 we cooperate with a number of Global Leaders, who have priority in developing pilot applications. A pilot demonstration page is available for the **island of Schouwen-Duiveland Green Travel Guide** (see below for an example of the map which is part of every Green Travel Guide page).



Interested to **make a Green Travel Guide yourself**? Ask us for the Travel Guide Program Outline.

## Background and management of the initiative

Global Leaders is a program of Green Destinations, jointly operated by Green Destinations Foundation, Green Destinations Services and the Slovenian Factory for Sustainable Tourism GoodPlace. 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. Co-founders: Brian T. Mullis, founder of Sustainable Travel International (STI); now Director, Guyana Tourism Authority, and Costas D. Christ, Editor of National Geographic.

The program is managed by:

- Albert Salman, overall program management and programs 1, 2C, 2D and 3;
- Hugo de Jong, for programs 2A, 2B, and 2C.
- Jana Apih and Tina Zakonjšek, GoodPlace, for programs 2B and 2D.

The development of the program is supported by members of the Global Leaders Community.

## More information

Green Destination Global Leaders <http://greendestinations.org/global-leaders/>.

Albert Salman, Green Destinations, [albert@greendestinations.org](mailto:albert@greendestinations.org)