

PRESS RELEASE

Empowering European Tour Operators for Sustainable Futures

Final hybrid event of the SUSTOUR Project, Cascais, Portugal - 13-14 September 2023

The grand finale of the EU-COSME funded SUSTOUR project, an ambitious 3-year endeavour aimed at promoting sustainable practices within the European tourism industry, is set to take place on September 13th and 14th in Cascais, Portugal. The final event will showcase achievements and best practices of travel agents and tour operators who have successfully integrated sustainability into their business and operations.

Brussels, 28 August 2023. The Final Hybrid Peer-to-Peer Learning Event of SUSTOUR is the crowning achievement of an initiative that has brought together over 600 tour operators and travel agents from across Europe. Over the course of three years, these small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have worked to enhance the sustainability of their operations, all while collectively contributing to the broader goals of responsible tourism.

The event will serve as a platform for showcasing the remarkable outcomes of the SUSTOUR project. Attendees will have the opportunity to delve into the project's results, which reflect the collective dedication of participating SMEs towards achieving sustainability milestones. This celebratory occasion will also foster valuable networking opportunities, reinforcing connections among SMEs that share a common commitment to sustainable tourism.

Highlights of the Final Hybrid Peer-to-Peer Learning Event include:

Presentation of the SUSTOUR Project Results: A comprehensive overview of the achievements, innovations, and advancements made by some of the participating tour operators and travel agents, showcasing their contributions to the sustainable tourism landscape.

Exploration of Best Practices: The event will feature best practice presentations and lively discussions where SMEs from all over Europe will exchange insights and success stories related to various themes, such as supply chain management, carbon footprint reduction, single-use plastic reduction, sustainable excursion management and sustainability marketing.

Expert Keynotes and Panel Discussions: Each of the 5 theme sessions will be headlined by an industry expert who will share their insights and knowledge. These sessions will also include moderated panel discussions that shine a spotlight on exemplary success stories from among the participating SMEs.

Grand Finale Travelife Award Ceremony: The event will close with the prestigious Travelife Award Ceremony, an acknowledgment of the outstanding efforts and achievements of the SMEs in the context of the SUSTOUR project.

As the Final Hybrid Peer-to-Peer Learning Event of SUSTOUR approaches, anticipation is building within the sustainable tourism community. The event's unique blend of knowledge-sharing, celebration, and recognition promises to leave a lasting imprint on the industry's trajectory.

Said President of ECTAA, Frank Oostdam: "The accomplishments of the companies under the COSME-funded project inspire us all. We look to motivate others to join the journey towards sustainability. ECTAA remains committed to promoting sustainability within the industry beyond this project, developing tools and partnerships for a future of sustainable travel."

For those unable to attend in person, the event will be streamed live, allowing a global audience to participate and engage in the discussions and celebrations. The programme and registration link are available from the SUSTOUR website ([click here](#)).

[SUSTOUR](#) is an EU-funded [COSME](#) project to further develop and implement tools and standards to help tour operators and travel agents improve their sustainability performance. It also provides an SME support budget of 600.000€ to roll out an extensive training and certification support scheme for tour operators and travel agents. The project is managed by a [consortium](#) of 7 organisations and is [supported](#) by 24 travel trade associations.

[Travelife for Tour Operators](#) is an internationally recognized training, management and certification scheme for sustainability in tourism. It aims to provide companies with realistic sustainability goals, tools and solutions to implement positive change within their businesses and supply chains.

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