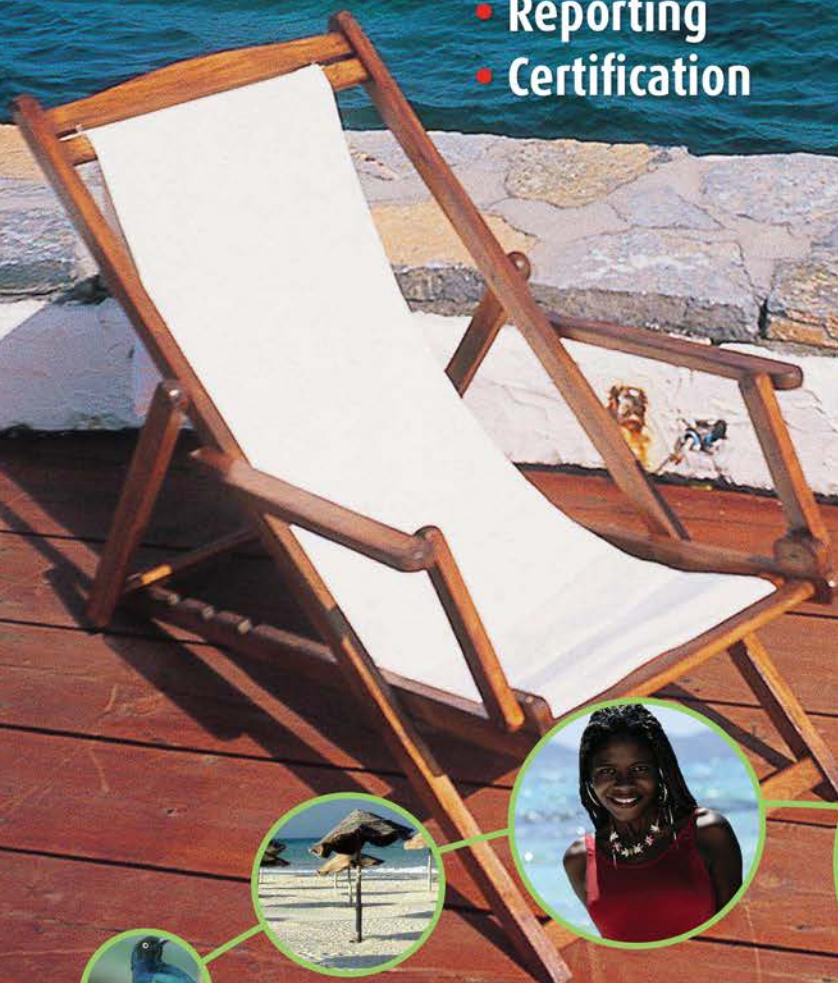


### Corporate Social Responsibility for Tour operators and Travel agents

- Training
- Management
- Best practice standards
- Supplier assessment
- Market place
- Communication
- Reporting
- Certification



## Towards a sustainable tourism supply chain

**Tour operators and travel agents play a central role in the tourism industry. As intermediates between tourists and tourism businesses, they can influence the choices of consumers, practices of suppliers and the development within destinations. Through their unique position travel companies can make an important contribution to the protection of the environment and culture, and in promoting social and human rights standards in the destinations they visit.**

More and more tour operators and tourism businesses are taking an active approach towards sustainability, not only because consumers expect them to do so, but also because they are aware that intact destinations are essential for the long-term survival of the tourism industry. Key operating areas where travel companies can integrate sustainability practices are:

- **Office operations**, for example by saving paper and energy, and complying with best labour practices.
- **Product development**, by integrating sustainability principles in the selection criteria of suppliers (e.g. accommodations, transport companies, excursions).
- **Working with Suppliers**, by supporting and motivating your business partners towards sustainability, for example with trainings, information and incentives.
- **Customer relations**, by creating awareness and responsible choices, for example through information and code of conducts.
- **Destinations**, by supporting destination stakeholders' efforts to address sustainability issues, and financially contributing to conservation and social projects.



## Membership packages

The Travelife programme for tour operators and travel agents provides you with a state of the art and affordable system to improve, audit and communicate your sustainability achievements. The programme follows a three-stage approach.

### Stage 1. Travelife Engaged

In the first stage the company introduces the appropriate management procedures. An appointed sustainability co-ordinator obtains the personal Travelife training certificate and implements primary steps and good practices. During this engagement stage the company is not rewarded yet.

### Stage 2. Travelife Partner

Based on a sustainability report and compliance with basic requirements assessed by Travelife, the company will reach the Travelife Partner status. This status enables the company to communicate its sustainability commitment with the support of the **Travelife Partner** logo. The company is now qualified to work step-by-step towards the final stage.



### Stage 3. Travelife Certified

In the third stage, the company's is in compliance with the **Travelife Certified** standard for travel companies. The standard has been Recognised as the first tour operator standard in compliance with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) criteria. Compliance is verified by an independent auditor based on an on-site assessment. With the Travelife Certified award logo you can communicate your excellence in sustainability to your clients and other stakeholders.



## Travelife for Hotels and Accommodations

The Travelife sustainability system for hotels provides support, advice and tools to help (your) accommodations to improve their sustainability performance and cash-flow. Through a web-based facility you can evaluate and compare the sustainability performance of your hotels, thereby avoiding the need to collect data and audit hotels individually. Hotel managers can check their sustainability performance, get feedback and monitor progress. By complying with the requirements of social and environmental criteria hotels will receive a Travelife award, based on an independent inspection. Hotels benefit directly from cost savings and gain a competitive advantage by marketing their business as Travelife awarded in the tour operator brochures and websites.

## International business partners

Outbound and inbound operators need each other's commitment to create a more sustainable supply chain. Outbound operators are key in product design and in communicating about sustainability and sustainable products towards the customer. Inbound operators are key in local product development and supporting and evaluating local tourism businesses on sustainability.

The Travelife tools enable you to engage your international business partners. Your partners can use the same training and reporting programme to reach Partner or Certified level. Furthermore, your partners in destinations can take part in Travelife training programmes which have already been provided in more than 25 countries.



Travelife training for Incoming Partners in Kenya.

## Market place

Contracting already sustainable businesses is an easy way to make your supply chain more sustainable. The Travelife Collection provides you with an up-to-date overview of Travelife awarded hotels. The Travel Market provides a global overview of tourism businesses with sustainability credentials, such as local agents (inbound), accommodations, community-based tourism initiatives and sustainable destinations.

## Joining Travelife is easy!

Joining Travelife is easy and affordable. Our practical web-based solutions make Travelife convenient for both small and (very) large companies. Step-by-step we will guide you towards sustainability. Register for free and evaluate your performance through our Sustainability Scan. Membership fees are related to the different stages (Engaged, Partner and Certified) and number of staff members.

[www.travelife.org/touoperator](http://www.travelife.org/touoperator)



Co-funded by the Eco-innovation Initiative of the European Union



## Travelife

Travelife is a fair and affordable programme that helps tour operators and travel agencies to manage and improve social and environmental impacts by complying with the international sustainability criteria. Ultimately, when a company meets the requirements, it will receive a Travelife award. To support you on your road to sustainability, Travelife offers a wide range of instruments which include:

- Training for personal certification
- Action planning and reporting tools
- Suppliers assessment and award system
- B2B tools and market place
- Consumer communication tools
- Destination co-operation tools
- Recognition and Certification

Travelife is supported by a growing number of tourism associations that promote Travelife among their members. These include ABTA (United Kingdom), ANVR (Netherlands), ASR (Germany), HATTA and SETE (Greece); SMAL/AFTA (Finland); DRF (Denmark), SRF (Sweden), ACTA (Cyprus); TEATA and ATTA (Thailand), KATO (Kenia) and BRAZTOA (Brazil).



## Training

In order to raise awareness of tourism impacts and support the effective introduction of sustainability, Travelife provides state of the art training and coaching to travel companies. Practical tools and online training modules include all operating areas (office, suppliers, destinations and customers). The training is concluded with an online exam, providing a personal Travelife certificate. The training is also open for students and other professionals and is already available in more than 15 languages including Italian, Spanish, German, Greek, Portuguese, French, Russian and Turkish.

## Management system

The Travelife management system involves six steps. These include the appointment and training of a sustainability co-ordinator, a baseline assessment of your operations, the development and implementation of company policies and action plans, and regular monitoring and reporting. The Travelife management system is in compliance with the ISO 14001 standard for environmental management and EMAS, the official EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme.

## Action plan and reporting

The Travelife action planning and reporting tool provides an easy online tool to plan and report your sustainability steps. The actions presented are suitable for companies of any size and are based on what (other) travel companies already do successfully. The reporting tool provides travel associations with the opportunity to monitor their members' commitment and progress. The reporting themes and criteria are in compliance with the ISO 26001 guidelines for Corporate Social Responsibility, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and the EMAS III sectorial reference document for tour operators.



## Best practice standards

In order to provide clear direction and avoid confusion among suppliers, Travelife developed a set of sustainability best practice standards which are meant to inspire suppliers world-wide and can also be used by tour operators to evaluate and compare suppliers if they wish to do so. Until now, standards were developed for accommodations, transport and activities such as animal attractions, mountain trekking and scuba diving excursions. The Travelife standards include both social and environmental criteria and are compatible with established sustainability standards such as the EU Ecolabel for Hotels and Campsites and the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria.

## Co-operation with destinations

Tour operators have a direct interest in the protection of the beauty and uniqueness of destinations. They have a responsibility to influence decisions that affect the environmental, social and economic sustainability at the destination. Travelife supports a co-ordinated approach between tour operators and local destinations in order to foster sustainability. Travelife is working together with governments and the local hotel sectors in order to increase sustainability standards of contracted hotels, for example in Austria, Italy, Turkey, Thailand, Brazil and Kenya. It is believed that by such a market-led common approach, tour operators, local governments and suppliers can be more effective in their efforts towards more sustainable destinations.

