

Green Destinations, bookdifferent.com and Fair Voyage launch Good Travel Alliance to make sustainable travel easy

Amsterdam & Zurich, 5 March 2020. Green Destinations, organizer of the annual Sustainable Top 100 Destination Awards, bookdifferent.com, the leading platform for sustainable accommodations, and Fair Voyage, an innovative sustainable tour operator platform, launch the Good Travel Alliance to increase visibility for sustainable destinations and make sustainable travel easier for consumers. As purpose-driven organizations, each with a fundamental sustainability mission, the three founding partners of the Good Travel Alliance share the principles of independent third party checks and science-based research to verify sustainability, stay clear of conflicts of interest and provide trustworthy choices for consumers. By using technology as a force for good, connecting databases and collaborating on awareness building, the Good Travel Alliance strives to make sustainable travel easy by providing transparent, online bookable sustainable travel choices for consumers.

Sustainable travel remains a niche in the tourism industry. Travellers are demanding more sustainable travel choices, destinations all around the world want to become more sustainable, accommodations want to go green and local travel service providers want to operate more sustainable travel experiences. Yet, consumers struggle to identify truly sustainable choices amongst a proliferation of labels and CSR messages, destinations struggle to find the balance between financial and socio-environmental sustainability, and responsible local travel service providers struggle to compete against lower priced offers that are equally branded “sustainable”.

To solve this paradox, three purpose-driven organizations have taken the lead to establish sustainable travel role models – Green Destinations for destinations, bookdifferent.com for accommodations, and Fair Voyage for tour packages. To strengthen their collaboration on information sharing and awareness building, the three travel impact organizations have now formalized their partnership and launched the Good Travel Alliance. The partners announced their alliance on March 4 in Berlin.

“We were looking forward to providing a stage for this announcement as part of our dedicated sustainability track at ITB this year,” comments Rika Jean-François, CSR Commissioner of ITB Berlin. *“Only by collaborating radically, we can make sustainability a reality, and the representatives of the Good Travel Alliance are leading by example. I look forward to much progress being reported at ITB 2021.”*

The partnership is based on three principles. By only promoting third party checked destinations, accommodations and tour operators as sustainable, the Good Travel Alliance

partners want to solve the greenwashing paradox and offer reliable sustainable travel information and choices to consumers. By aggregating bookable sustainable choices and making sustainability standards transparent, the partners want to make sustainable travel easy for consumers. And by promoting sustainable destinations, the Good Travel Alliance strives to drive sustainable revenues to local communities and help travellers experience authentic culture and biodiversity whilst making a real difference for people and the planet.

Good Travel Guide: Promoting sustainable destinations

Green Destinations is a leading sustainability certification for destinations and one of currently only three bodies accredited by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), testifying its rigorous and holistic sustainability checks verified through independent on-site audits. Green Destinations is also the organizer of the annual Sustainable Top 100 Destination Awards at ITB to recognize the world's leading cultural, environmental and community-based tourism initiatives.

“This year we have started to develop the Good Travel Guide to increase visibility of sustainable destinations and their sustainable travel offer”, announces founder Albert Salman. “With this Guide, we want to inform travellers about sustainable travel choices and help them plan and book a sustainable vacation. Destinations will only be truly sustainable when this will be possible, so the alliance will try to make this work together with destinations and tourism boards.”

Helping travellers book sustainable accommodations

bookdifferent.com is a hotel booking site and a social enterprise that makes it easy for travellers to book sustainable accommodations, having aggregated the world's largest database of eco-certified accommodations. When booking a hotel through bookdifferent.com, travellers can rest assured they are choosing the greenest option available and that their accommodation is taking the right steps towards a responsible development. By only collaborating with ecolabels that comply with three rigorous criteria, the company helps shed light on the greenwashing mystery, striving for transparency in the tourism sector.

“It is important that we share information transparently and collaborate on awareness building,” emphasizes founder Lonneke de Kort. “Tracking and making sense of the sustainability data jungle requires an integrated initiative across the sustainable travel ecosystem. By connecting our databases, we can accelerate our impact.”

Helping travellers book sustainable experiences with locals

Fair Voyage is a social enterprise that exclusively promotes independently verified sustainable tour operators on its platform. Travellers can compare, customise and book fair multi-day trips directly with local destination experts. The company uses strict sustainability criteria in assessing whether tour operators are allowed to promote their offers via Fair Voyage.

“Sustainable tourism can be a force for good”, believes founder Alexandra Pastollnigg. “I’m particularly excited about the potential of ecotourism as a sustainable funding source for biodiversity restoration and positive climate action, and developing such sustainable travel offers in collaboration with our new alliance partners.”

Collaborating openly and reporting progress regularly

Green Destinations, bookdifferent.com and Fair Voyage believe in the importance of radical cross-channel collaboration for sustainability. The Good Travel Alliance does not see itself as competing but complementary to other sustainable travel initiatives and remains open for new alliance partners to join forces. The founding partners plan to announce more details in the coming weeks and share regular progress reporting throughout the year.

Contact information

For more information about Green Destinations, visit greendestinations.org or contact Maria Jalwan via contact@goodtravel.guide.

For more information about bookdifferent.com, visit bookdifferent.com or contact Lonneke de Kort via info@bookdifferent.com.

For more information about Fair Voyage, visit fairvoyage.com or contact Alexandra Pastollnigg via media@fairvoyage.com.

About Green Destinations

Green Destinations is the world’s largest non-profit organisation for sustainable destinations, with experts and ambassadors working with more than 200 destinations in 80 countries. With its country representatives, Green Destinations (GD) works to support destination managers in enhancing sustainability, tourism quality and market visibility. The GSTC-Accredited GD Certification Committee supervises certification and benchmark awards (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum) based upon the GSTC-Recognized GD Standard. GD offers destinations and

countries state-of-the-art tools for baseline assessment, monitoring, reporting and strategic development, also in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



About bookdifferent.com

bookdifferent.com is an innovative green travel data-organization and a hotel booking site with a mission, namely, to make the travel sector more sustainable. How? By making it easier for consumers and businesses alike to book sustainable accommodations. bookdifferent.com is the first organization in the world that has brought together over 14.000 certified hotels of more than 30 renowned eco-labels with global coverage, has mapped how the certified accommodations score on the four pillars of sustainability (management, fair & local, cultural friendly and nature & environment) through the staygreencheck score and has calculated the CO2-emission of over 2 million hotels. The methodology and green indicators that bookdifferent.com disposes of is evidenced-based and verified by the advisory board of bookdifferent.com.



About Fair Voyage

Fair Voyage is a purpose-driven social enterprise with the mission to make sustainable travel easy. Founded 2017 in Zurich, the startup has built an innovative multi-day tour booking platform that exclusively promotes independently verified sustainable tour operators. Travellers can compare, customise and book fair trips directly with local destination experts. In partnership with leading sustainable travel audit and training organizations, Fair Voyage verifies sustainability through independent on-site checks and supports responsible local tourism entrepreneurs as sustainability changemakers in their destinations.

