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Welcome

Review & Outlook

Dear readers, dear TourCert Community,

I wonder whether future generations will be able to travel the world as we do today. To meet people from other cultures, fall in love with foreign countries. What do you think? Will they be able to?

When I talk about sustainability, corporate responsibility, etc., everybody agrees. I hear responses such as “Yes, that’s right”, “That’s the right way”, “Oh, we are already very sustainable”. But realities are different. We still have a lot of homework to do. Today, not tomorrow!

We teach our children not to fight with others, to work things out, to respect others, to clean up our mess, not to hurt others, to share and not to be greedy. So why don’t we stick to it ourselves?

We should not forget our responsibilities. We are the ones to decide in what kind of world future generations are growing up in. And we decide on what kind of world we want to live in right now.

I would like to express my gratitude to all of you, and especially to every member of our TourCert Community, who decided to change: To change the way of doing business, to change the way we think. Thank you, all of you who have assumed responsibility to take action!

Aristotle once said: “You are what you do, not what you say you will do.”

So let’s do it! Together.

Marco Giraldo, Managing Partner

A day-tripper tax in Venice. New levies on cruise passengers in Amsterdam. A ban on motor coaches in Rome. Strict new entry policies at Machu Picchu. We are facing new taxes and restrictions designed to address the growing problem of overtourism.

The East Frisian island Juist seems to be doing it right by opening a dialogue between guests and the administration. The island management is carrying out an extremely clever exercise of inviting all stakeholders to comment and to meet at roundtables.

Such discussions can take the heat out of the debate and cool tensions between residents and tourists that could ultimately threaten the tourism industry and local economies relying on it. Stakeholder analyses and stakeholder dialogues are fundamental parts of our TourCert sustainability certifications.

10 years ago TourCert designed its system to help tourism managers to strategically get their businesses or destinations on track towards sustainability in an intensive exchange with local and regional stakeholders. Important parameters include product and service quality, customer orientation, a sparing use of resources, accessibility, and sustainable mobility. A sustainable destination is a joint accomplishment that depends on all institutions and companies cooperating as partners.

Here’s to another 10 years of sustainable development!

Dr. Peter Zimmer, Managing Partner
Travel for Tomorrow
Consulting & Certification

TourCert promotes responsible tourism, so that future generations will also be able to enjoy and discover our planet. No matter whether you are a company, a destination or a traveller – we provide orientation. To us, “Travel for Tomorrow” means to make the travel industry fit for the future and to sensitize travellers to achieve a positive contribution of everyone involved in their holiday experience.

About us & our offers

Our non-profit innovation and certification company was founded in 2009 with the task of promoting ecological, social and economic corporate responsibility in tourism. TourCert advises and accompanies tour operators, accommodation providers, destinations and other tourism entities in the implementation of a consistently sustainable approach. We also provide qualification in the form of different kinds of seminars and online trainings offered by the TourCert Academy. We certify participants with the international TourCert label for sustainability and corporate responsibility (CSR) in tourism and, as an initial recognition, award the TourCert Check.

TourCert works on several international tourism projects and initiatives that promote sustainable tourism. We conduct feasibility studies, develop concepts, offer development education, and are engaged in public relations.

TourCert certification system

We have developed an internationally recognized certification system which penetrates the entire tourism value chain in terms of sustainability and is applicable internationally. We have also introduced a methodology to support companies and destinations in implementing the TourCert system. "Empowerment" is the key, which means the development of learning structures and committed joint corporate development. Tourism companies train their own sustainability managers who pass on their knowledge to the team and motivate their colleagues to act sustainably.

Companies and destinations certified by TourCert have audited their business activities for sustainability according to the following criteria:

- Responsible corporate governance;
- Respect for human rights, anti-discrimination, and protection of children;
- Compliance with labour standards, training of employees;
- Customer information on sustainable travel, surveys on customer satisfaction;
- Involvement of local communities and promotion of the region;
- Fair cooperation with partners and service providers;
- Active environmental protection by saving resources and offsetting CO₂ emissions.

Commitment of our TourCert Community

With the TourCert label, tourism companies and destinations clearly acknowledge their responsibility and commit themselves to improving their sustainability performance on a continuous basis. Consultants and online tools support the process of implementing responsible management along the entire value chain. Independent experts regularly review sustainability performance. Our highest decision-making authority is the honorary Certification Council.

For more information, have a look at our website: www.tourcert.org
In 2018 we were happy to welcome almost 90 new members in our community. In recent years, the number of companies with TourCert certification or TourCert Check has increased significantly, especially in Latin America. The current focus is on Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, and Costa Rica.

Nevertheless, Germany, Switzerland and Austria remain important markets. And the TourCert Check has even found its way to Sri Lanka.

In addition to tour operators, hotels and other tourism businesses, more and more entire destinations are getting certified. We are proud to have 18 Sustainable Destinations in our community – 15 of them in Germany and three of them in Latin America.

In late 2018, the first community in Ecuador was certified as part of the project Turismo Comunitario (p. 8) (English: community based tourism).

Sustainable Destinations

The TourCert system "Sustainable Destinations" with the green N was launched in 2014 as a pilot project in the southern German state of Baden-Württemberg. It is the first certification scheme in a German-speaking country to consider the destination as a whole and to take all tourism service providers on board.

In the meantime, we have 18 tourism destinations in Germany and Latin America who are proud members of our certified communities. We have designed the system as a strategic mechanism to put a destination on the path to sustainability in an intensive exchange with the main stakeholders in tourism.

Important parameters include product and service quality, customer orientation, a sparing use of resources, accessibility, and sustainable mobility. Our criteria are in line with international sustainability standards and ensure an effective strategic management process.

A sustainable destination is a joint accomplishment depending on the cooperation of all institutions and companies as partners. Within the certified destinations, more than 400 tourism businesses work together as network partners and provide sustainable experiences for their guests.
Protecting Children

In recent years, the trend towards “Voluntourism” has increased considerably. The sector is profitable and continues to grow. Volunteering on holiday has many dark sides which are not visible to the traveller at first sight. Short-term stays are very popular, but also highly questionable, especially when it comes to child protection and sustainable development.

In order to make tour operators offering volunteer placements more transparent and to highlight committed providers, TourCert would also like to serve this market. Together with experts in this industry such as Tourism Watch at Bread for the World, Forum Anders Reisen, and WWF, we are currently developing the respective surveys.

TourCert is committed to the protection of children. In cooperation with the initiative 'The Code' we raise awareness and actively disseminate its Code of Conduct.

Voluntary Engagement

ISTO – OTSI

The International Social Tourism Organisation has a new vision of tourism for people and communities, taking development and sustainability into account. At its World Congress in October 2018, ISTO welcomed TourCert Managing Partner Marco Giraldo as a new member of the board.

The organisation has more than 160 members in 35 countries in Europe, the Americas and Africa, a dozen states and more than 30 local and regional authorities. TourCert seeks to support the members of ISTO with its management, consultancy and certification systems to improve and measure their sustainability performance.

Human Rights

Human rights are an integral part of the certification process of TourCert. As a founding member of the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism, we are actively committed to the respect for and protection of all human rights in tourism.

In order to integrate this important topic into the mind-set of tourism professionals, TourCert offers e-learning programmes, provides different tools and methods for tour operators to prevent human rights violations, and works together with initiatives for child protection such as ‘The Code’.

As a member of the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism, TourCert is actively involved in general meetings and takes leadership in working groups.
International Activities

TourCert Latina – Community with Power

The Latin American TourCert Community has been growing dynamically – to now encompass over 350 companies and 18 destinations in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic. To date, we have trained 1,160 sustainability managers and 23 consultants and auditors. But this is only the beginning.

More companies and destinations have already registered. Certified organisations are developing new products and building cooperation networks across countries and continents. Innovations and improvements do not only take place in operational processes. New topics such as the protection of biodiversity and poverty reduction through community tourism are also included.

As part of the TourCert Latina project and with support of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), a network of committed consulting partners, companies and destinations along tourism value chains has been established in five Latin American countries. They have joined hands on the way to a sustainable and better tourism.

Several of our tour operators from German-speaking countries were delighted and grateful for the initiatives in Latin America and have included some of the new products and destinations in their programmes.

Qualification of Sustainability Managers

Funded by a partnership of the develoPPP.de programme through Sequa gGmbH, TourCert trains Sustainability Managers in Ecuador to make the idea of responsible tourism take root. A qualification programme for tourism professionals is being developed in cooperation with local partners, the Fundación Municipal de Turismo Cuenca, the Ecuador Tourism Ministry (MINTUR) and Azuay University.

For this purpose, ten sustainability trainers have been trained in intensive train-the-trainer workshops. They in turn intend to qualify 30 sustainability managers from partner companies in the pilot destinations Cuenca Centro Histórico, Cajas, San Joaquín, Ambato, Puntilla Santa Elena, Machalilla, and Cotopaxi and lead the destinations to certification. The training programme is accompanied by a “Destination Monitor” – an online platform that supports the application of sustainability standards, the monitoring of performance indicators, and the strengthening of product development and market communication.

The project was launched in December 2017 and is scheduled to be completed by September 2019.
Turismo Comunitario

Tourism should benefit everyone – not only large travel companies, but above all the local population. This is exactly the approach of “Turismo Comunitario” (English: Community-Based Tourism). It represents a form of authentic tourism in which travellers spend their holiday in small, indigenous communities in order to get in touch with the local population, people’s lives, cultures, and traditions.

Furthermore, the sustainable community-based tourism approach is an enriching way of reducing poverty, of strengthening cultural identity and of protecting biodiversity in Latin America. TourCert supports this approach and is involved in three Turismo Comunitario projects in Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia.

The project activities are coordinated by the two non-profit organisations kate and VSocial Foundation. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) provides financial support. The focal points of the projects are communities in Ecuador, Peru and Colombia which we support as experts for sustainability in community-based tourism.

Biodiversity in the Dominican Republic

The tourist destination Las Galeras on the Samana peninsula strives to get certified as the first sustainable destination with a focus on biodiversity. The fantastic beaches, the small fishing village, the breath-taking nature and Caribbean calmness are only known to a few. People here are still far away from mass tourism – and want their region to remain this way.

The certification is a pilot process of GiZ and TourCert. With the technical support of the Global Nature Fund, biodiversity indicators will be integrated. This provides the tourism sector with instruments to promote the protection and conservation of biodiversity with the participation of various stakeholders.

The partner companies of the destination play an important role in the process. 20 companies have already started to analyse their approach to sustainability and biodiversity by using checklists. Efforts are made to integrate attractions in the hinterland in order not to concentrate all tourist activities on the beach. Nature reserves, mangrove forests, a “ginger route”, and of course the local communities invite you to stay and enjoy.
TourCert Danube

Thanks to the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU), we are able to work in an exciting project at the Danube with a special focus on Bulgaria. We see a considerable demand for environmentally friendly and socially responsible tourism offers – but not enough information about them. Interesting potential remains untapped. So far, very few of the hotels in Bulgaria have managed to combine their commitment to the environment with efficient marketing and successful sales. We will change that! Our goal is setting the foundation for success.

We want to promote sustainable tourism development and nature responsibility with an innovative storytelling platform while taking local and national peculiarities into account and to create an added value for participating companies in order to attract new clients.

Additionally, a systematic sustainability assessment of the companies quickly identifies potential for improvement. It is also our aim to establish a network in order to promote the exchange between tourism stakeholders. The unique stories of the participating companies will be published on an online platform and showcased with examples from the industry.

Outlook Africa & Cuba

Tourism Excellence Uganda

Sustainability is omnipresent in our current economy. Reduced resource consumption and cost savings, greater customer and employee satisfaction, improved market access to image enhancement and efficient management are only some of the reasons to develop sustainability in a business.

As part of a joint project by TourCert and Private Safaris, a brand of DER Touristik Suisse AG, and financially supported by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), we will accompany the Ugandan tourism industry in establishing an ecological and responsible way of doing business.

Cuba Natural

In a feasibility study carried out in 2018, supported by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Cuba proved to be a country with promising prerequisites for our approaches. Tourism growth is high and the ecological, socio-cultural and socio-economic impacts are partly very noticeable. There is an increasing need to transform Cuban tourism into a sustainable sector.

avenTOURa and TourCert are committed to ensuring that tourism protects nature, preserves culture and traditions and promotes local value creation with sustainable destination management. The project Cuba Natural is supposed to start in 2019.
Seminars & Trainings

Courses

TourCert organises regular training workshops for Sustainability Managers who can then lead a TourCert certification process in a company. In 2018, TourCert trained more than 500 Sustainability Managers. They were specifically trained for travel companies or destinations.

Almost 60 TourCert consultants and auditors were also trained in seminars and workshops, which took place in Europe and Latin America.

In addition, more webinars were held, which were particularly suitable for small companies.

E-Learnings

The e-learning courses offered by our TourCert Academy are designed to make learning simple and convenient – wherever and whenever it suits the participants. Appealing design, an interactive approach and consistent hands-on content make learning easy despite the complexity of the topics.

Our standard e-learning programmes were completely revised in 2017/18: "Travel for Tomorrow Basic" replaces "CSR Basic" and offers everything you need to know about sustainability and social responsibility. It describes guidelines for the systematic integration of sustainability and provides tangible advice on how to implement and communicate sustainability in day-to-day business.

The compact e-learning course “Fit for future” imparts basic knowledge on sustainability and social responsibility and prepares you for future challenges in the tourism industry. “Fit for future” is available free of charge in German and English on our website:

www.tourcert.org/en/training/fit-for-future

Additional e-learning courses are planned in 2019. Tailor-made e-learning courses may also be offered. Are you interested? Please contact us!

“Plan for the future, because that’s where you’ll spend the rest of your life.” – Mark Twain
TourCert Events
ITB Berlin

TourCert celebrated its new members and achievements at the ITB in Berlin with a prominent stand in Hall 4.1 and was present on the Pow-Wow stage for tourism experts with a presentation on the topic “Sustainable Coasts in Europe & Latin America”.

The TourCert evening event under the motto “Travel for Tomorrow” on the main stage is already an established event. In 2018 it included the premiere of the new TourCert image film and an update on current developments by managing partner Marco Giraldo.

Martin Balaš in an interview with the moderator Nadine Kreutzer

We celebrated a 50 percent growth of our TourCert Community and introduced the newly certified Sustainable Destination Cuenca in Ecuador in an interview with our destination expert Martin Balaš.

“Fair Handeln” & fairwärts

The demand for sustainable tourism products and services has been increasing among travel enthusiasts. Tourists want credible offers from reliable tour operators. Therefore, TourCert cooperates with the Foundation for Development Cooperation Baden-Württemberg (SEZ) and was in charge of the exhibitor assessment of tourism providers and of organising the programme on sustainable tourism at the “Fair Handeln” trade fair from 5 to 8 April 2018 in Stuttgart.

The award ceremony of the fairwärts competition took place on the main stage in hall 7. The winners were announced in two categories: Tour Operators: 1. viventura with the trip “viActive Ecuador Galapagos”. 2. Timbercoast with the trip “Travel Cargo Voyage; Destinations: 1. Janbeck*s FAIRRhaus with the trip “Journey to the Sea”. 2. ReNatour with the trip “Villa KaliMeera – Family holiday on Corfu”.
TourCert Forum

Inspiring lectures, stimulating discussions, valuable input by experts and a lot of space and time for the exchange of experiences were on the agenda of the 6th TourCert Forum.

On Friday, 16 November 2018, the annual TourCert Forum took place in Frankfurt/Main. It was the sixth time that experts in sustainable tourism met to exchange ideas. A good combination of members of the TourCert community, partners and of course the TourCert team came together to discuss points of view and current topics, to establish contacts and to learn about news from TourCert.

We welcomed climate researcher Stefan Gössling who critically dealt with "Customer loyalty through climate change" and talked about the role of sustainability managers. The main part of the day was dedicated to "open space". With this method, everyone can contribute their own content and questions, working groups are formed and solutions are elaborated. It turned out to be fruitful discussions and overall a successful day.

Initiative for Excellence – Sustainable Destinations

TourCert teamed up with kate and the tourism board of the Northern Black Forest to invite tourism experts and destination managers from all over Germany to a network event in Bad Herrenalb on Tuesday, 4th December 2018. The event was entitled “Initiative of Excellence for sustainable destinations – Shaping tomorrow’s tourism together”.

The event was initiated because destinations committed to sustainability seem to face similar challenges. Many sustainability measures lack hands-on experience and the complexity of sustainability issues causes uncertainty.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda provided the framework for the event. The meeting was conceived as a kick-off for a continuous exchange and was intended as an impetus for a long-term network. The majority of the 25 participating organisations already indicated their willingness to be part of such a network, which made the project initiators submit a funding application to the German Confederation.

The kick-off event was derived from the competition and educational project “fairwärts” and was co-financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).
Communication

Media Outreach

There is always something to communicate: Be it achievements in our projects, new members in our community, exciting events or new partnerships. In 2018, we published six press releases. Furthermore, we contribute to the press service of the Arge Latin America every month.

Since last year we have been distributing our press releases through an online tool which is a convenient way of spreading our messages, including pictures, keywords, videos, and links. This tool has also made it easier to distribute updates.

Please visit our newsroom (in German): www.lifepr.de/newsroom/tourcert

The press itself is also very active and there is a growing interest in sustainable tourism. We regularly receive requests regarding interviews, our certification and the label in general from reporters, but also from school book publishers and magazines. In 2018, there were more than 65 media reports about TourCert.

TourCert Journal

With the new website we introduced a Journal, which functions like a blog and presents the most current news to our readers.

Since it was launched in November 2017 we reported on more than 20 different topics.

Keep yourself updated on our website (articles usually in German, English and Spanish): www.tourcert.org/en/journal

"If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito in the room." – Dalai Lama
Newsletter

Our TourCert newsletter is also new. Every three months we put together the most important updates for our community, partners, friends and other stakeholders who are interested in the development of a sustainable tourism industry.

Since it was launched in July 2018 we have increased the number of recipients by five percent. The opening rate varies between 30 and 45 percent, depending on the language.

The German version reached a click rate of almost 18 percent. The sector benchmark is around five percent in comparison. The bounce and unsubscribe rates are very low. We are very happy to have such an interested and loyal readership.

The TourCert news are published in German, English, and Spanish. Stay up to date and sign up here: www.tourcert.org/en/#newsletter

Social Media

Last but not least, social media play an important role in our communication. Overall, the TourCert Germany and Latin America Facebook pages have over 3,500 followers.

Please visit us and follow us here: www.facebook.com/tourcert and www.facebook.com/tourcertlatino

TourCert Toolbox

In 2018 we also created the very first TourCert Toolbox for our community. It provides information and tools to increase the visibility of the commitment to sustainability in the context of the TourCert certification.

The toolbox contains general background information on TourCert, but also specific indications on how to use the TourCert Label, useful text and support modules, links to our video and information on advertising materials.

We seek to increase awareness and the visibility of sustainable tourism and of course of TourCert as a quality label and best practice. Google already shows 691,100 results associated with our name.
Special Thanks & Team

Our most important and highest decision-making authority is our honorary Certification Council. To ensure credibility, a group of dedicated people from business, science, environment, development, and politics decide on the general conditions and on awarding TourCert certifications.

Sven Wolf of ServiceQualität Deutschland has joined the 13 members in Germany. In addition, two independent regional certification councils have now taken up their work in Peru and Ecuador.

We are very glad and proud to be able to work with them and would like to express our sincere gratitude for their commitment.

Furthermore, we would like to present our TourCert team in Germany. It consists of a versatile, dynamic team — we are all passionate about travel and responsibility.

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