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Moving fairwärts: Winners of the 2019/2020 Competition for Sustainable Travel Announced

Four award winners selected by an expert jury and an additional public online vote

The non-profit organization KATE Umwelt & Entwicklung e.V., together with the innovation and certification company TourCert, organized the fairwärts competition for the third time. Together, the two organizations are committed to promoting responsible tourism. Supported by experts from the Global Nature Fund (GNF), Service Qualität Deutschland (SQD), and the Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung, this year's competition focused on sustainable travel and service offers in the three thematic areas of biodiversity, sustainable service quality, and fair encounters. *fairwärts* is funded by Engagement Global on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The fairwärts competition and educational project targets German tour operators, accommodation providers, destinations, and travelers. It encourages them to engage with issues such as fair encounters in travel destinations, human rights, environmental protection, biodiversity, and sustainable service quality.During the application phase from November 2019 to February 2020, tourism businesses submitted sustainable travel offers, services, campaigns, and projects in one of the three competition categories. A five-member expert jury selected one winner per category. In addition, an online public vote was held until April 2020, allowing participants to vote online for their favorite travel offer or project, thereby selecting the audience award winner.

First place in the "Biodiversity" category went to travel-to-nature, a tour operator specializing in sustainable nature travel worldwide with a focus on Costa Rica and Cuba. At travel-to-nature, tourism and environmental protection go hand in hand. The jury was particularly impressed by the "La Tigra" rainforest project in Costa Rica, dedicated to sustainable rainforest reforestation.The project began several years ago with the reforestation of a small deforested property initiated by Managing Director Rainer Stoll. Today, the centerpiece of the initiative is the sustainably operated La Tigra Lodge, an ecological retreat in the middle of the jungle. Visitors to La Tigra Lodge actively contribute to nature conservation. Guests can explore the area via various trails and plant a native tree under professional guidance.The lodge staff consists of local Costa Ricans who are deeply committed to the project and receive ongoing training in environmental protection and reforestation.The jury praised both the project's biodiversity protection efforts and its strong social impact.

First place in the "Sustainable Customer Journey" category went to Ammergauer Alpen GmbH, the destination management organization (DMO) that submitted its concept for sustainable tourism development in the nature park region.
The organization impressed the jury with a well-designed transport concept promoting sustainable mobility and a comprehensive strategy for sustainable visitor management.

Part of this strategy includes nature park rangers who not only support environmental conservation but also serve as contact persons for guests and local residents, providing valuable educational work.
Educational trails and guided nature tours range from moorland and birdwatching trails to beaver and eagle observation tours, herb excursions, and orchid hikes.
The jury justified its decision by highlighting the destination's approachable way of encouraging both residents and visitors to engage respectfully with nature and motivating them toward stronger environmental and nature conservation efforts.

First place in the "Fair Encounters" category was awarded to the tour operator FairAway Travel for its "Indonesia Impact Journey."
The travel package stands out through numerous authentic travel experiences such as workshops with local artists, cycling tours with local guides, stays with host families in indigenous communities, cooking classes, and shared hikes and plantation visits with local residents.Travelers are sensitized to cultural traditions and respectful behavior already during the preparation phase of the trip through guidance from local experts.
FairAway Travel convinced the jury with a holistic and impactful concept that places strong emphasis on involving local communities on equal terms and ensuring that sustainability and fairness are embedded throughout the entire travel experience, not only in individual components.

The tour operator Feel the World Travel won the **online audience vote** by a clear margin.
The trip "Feel Islands" received the highest number of votes from participants. During the 14-day round trip, young adults explore various regions of Thailand away from classic tourist hotspots.Instead, travelers immerse themselves in the culture of the Moken, former sea nomads. Participants stay near a Moken settlement in tents and take part in authentic activities such as handicraft workshops for traditional jewelry, diving, and rowing with traditional Moken boats.Through its "Adventure trips that make a difference," *Feel the World Travel* works primarily with local providers to ensure that local communities benefit as broadly as possible from tourism activities.

The planned award ceremony honoring the winners at the Fair Handeln trade fair in Stuttgart in April 2020 had to be canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions and event bans.
The recognition of this year's fairwärts winners therefore moved online and was implemented through social media, the fairwärts website, and additional campaigns.
In May 2020, KATE Umwelt & Entwicklung e.V. and TourCert also organized a joint webinar during the digital sustainability weeks at universities in Baden-Württemberg together with two of the four winners and one jury member.
The webinar "Fairreisen – Wie geht nachhaltiger Tourismus?" ("Fair Travel – How Does Sustainable Tourism Work?") can still be viewed online at: www.fairwaerts.de/web-seminar-nachhaltiges-reisen/

Further information about the winners is available at:
www.fairwaerts.de/gewinner-2020. Stay up to date via Facebook:
www.facebook.com/fairwaerts

Image and text materials related to this press release are available online.

About KATE Umwelt & Entwicklung e.V.
KATE Umwelt & Entwicklung e.V. has been operating in Stuttgart since 1997 as a non-profit consulting and educational organization focusing on sustainable business practices, corporate responsibility, global justice, and development cooperation.
In addition to consulting on energy and sustainability management, the organization's project work focuses particularly on sustainable tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Agenda 2030.

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About TourCert

The independent certification organization TourCert gGmbH was founded in 2009 with the mission of promoting ecological, social, and economic corporate responsibility in tourism. TourCert advises and supports tourism businesses and destinations in implementing sustainable and successful business practices and provides qualification programs through seminars and online training offered by the TourCert Academy.
In addition, the company certifies and awards the TourCert Seal for sustainability and corporate responsibility in tourism. As an entry-level recognition, TourCert also awards the distinction "TourCert Check."

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