

# Call for SMEs Application Guidelines

## SUSTOUR

Supporting Tour Operators  
and Travel Agents towards  
Sustainability



Co-funded by the COSME programme  
of the European Union



## Table of Contents

1. Overview .....	3
2. Introduction to SUSTOUR .....	4
2.1. Context.....	4
2.2. What is our objective? .....	4
2.3. Who are we? .....	5
3. Open call for tourism SMEs.....	6
3.1. What do we offer? .....	6
3.1.1. Sustainability certification programme .....	7
3.1.2. Accelerator programme .....	9
3.2. What are the benefits for tour operators and travel agents? .....	10
3.3. Who can apply?.....	11
3.4. How to apply? .....	12
3.5. What is expected from participants?.....	12
3.6. Additional information.....	13
4. Evaluation and selection .....	15
4.1. Evaluation and selection process.....	15
4.2. Evaluation criteria .....	16
4.3. Selection of SMEs and reserve list .....	18
5. How to contact us .....	18
Annex I – Application form template.....	19

## 1. Overview

SUSTOUR is a project financed by the EU (75%) and by a consortium of organisations (25%), which aims to **foster the capacities and skills of travel agents and tour operators (SMEs) to integrate sustainability principles** within their companies and supply chains.

This call for SME applications has been launched to **select a minimum of 175 SMEs** that will be able to benefit from a comprehensive **support programme** to help improve their sustainability performance. SMEs can select to obtain support towards **sustainability certification** and/or implementation of **innovative practices in their supply chain**.

**All participating SMEs will receive the EU co-financing.** SUSTOUR will additionally cover the remaining contribution for all **SMEs that are members of a SUSTOUR partner or supporting travel association**. Participation in the support programme for such SMEs is therefore **free of charge**. All **other SMEs will have to provide an own contribution**, ranging between 200€-400€ depending on the size of the SME.

A **budget of 595.000€** is allocated to the support programme.

The **timeline for application and implementation of the support programme** is as follow:

10 March 2022	Launch of call for SME applications
10 May 2022, 17h00 CET	Deadline for online applications
7 June 2022	Publication of selected SMEs
End of June 2022	Start of support programme
30 June 2023	End of support programme

Interested SMEs can apply on the following [website](https://www.travelife.info/sustour/?menu=call-for-smes):

**<https://www.travelife.info/sustour/?menu=call-for-smes>**

This document provides information on the aim and benefits of the support programme and will guide you through the application process and next steps.

## 2. Introduction to SUSTOUR

### 2.1. Context

End of 2019, the European Commission presented its Communication on the European Green Deal. The Green Deal is the new growth strategy of the EU, aiming to set Europe on the path of transformation to a climate-neutral, fair and prosperous society with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy. The European Green Deal aims at making Europe climate neutral by 2050, boosting the economy through green technology, creating sustainable industry and transport, and cutting pollution.

Achieving the 2030 goal of 55% greenhouse gas emissions reductions will require actions in all sectors, including tourism. **Travel agents and tour operators play a central role** in the tourism industry. As intermediates between tourists and suppliers, they **can influence the choices of consumers, the practices of suppliers and the development patterns of destinations**. This unique position means that travel agents and tour operators can make an important contribution to promote sustainability within the tourism sector and beyond.

### 2.2. What is our objective?

[SUSTOUR](#) is an EU-funded project that aims to **foster the capacities and skills of 175+ travel agents and tour operators (SMEs) to integrate sustainability principles within their companies and supply chains**. It does so by providing support through training, management systems, standards and solutions, which will improve their sustainable management and performance and open up new market opportunities.

To help travel agents and tour operators in their uptake of sustainability, the SUSTOUR project will implement a technical support scheme with a value of up to 595.000 €. The scheme will:

- **Build capacities** of 175+ tour operators through a blended training approach (classroom training, online, webinar, video seminars).
- **Coach 130+ tour operators** towards complying with 100+ best practices through onsite, group and distance coaching. Companies will develop a detailed sustainability report on their achievements.
- Evaluate and **certify tour operators** independently on the basis of international standards. As a result it is expected that 70 tour operators will obtain the basic Travelife Partner award and 60 tour operators will receive the Travelife Certified award.
- Support travel agents and tour operators in the implementation of **carbon and plastic management** strategies within their supply chains.

All participating SMEs will receive the EU co-financing. SUSTOUR will additionally cover the remaining contribution for all SMEs that are members of a SUSTOUR partner or supporting travel association (see chapter 2.3). Participation in the support programme for such SMEs is therefore free of charge. All other SMEs will have to provide an own contribution, ranging between 200€-400€ depending on the size of the SME (please see first point of chapter 3.6 for further details).

The SUSTOUR project runs from September 2020 to September 2023.

### 2.3. Who are we?

SUSTOUR is financed by the EU COSME programme (75%), which is the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs.

It is **co-financed** (25%) and led by a consortium of **7 partner organisations**:



**ECEAT** – European Centre for Eco and Agro Tourism – is a leading NGO in sustainable tourism. It is one of the founders of Travelife for Tour Operators and is managing the sustainability management and certification scheme.



**ECTAA** is the European umbrella organisation of travel agents and tour operators. Members are the national associations of 26 Member States of the European Union as well as Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The majority of them are partner or supporting travel associations of this project (see below).



**Futouris** brings together 26 national and international tour operator market leaders in sustainable tourism. Futouris is a sustainability initiative that develops model projects, training manuals and innovations that promote greater responsibility and sustainability in tourism.



**SMAL** is the Association of the Finnish Travel Industry. It is a consortium of some 190 travel agencies, tour operators and incoming agencies.



**ANVR** is the travel trade association in the Netherlands representing approximately 230 tour operators and 1.100 retail agencies, as well as other industry partners. ANVR has been a founding member of Travelife for Tour Operators.



**APAVT** is the Portuguese Association of Travel and Tourism Agencies. It currently counts 941 members, of which 817 are travel agencies and tour operators. Altogether, their members represent around 85% of the total sales volume of travel agencies in Portugal.



**UHPA** is the Association of Croatian Travel Agencies and has 221 members who, in turn, have 484 offices in Croatia and abroad.

In addition, the SUSTOUR project is supported by a number of **supporting travel associations** that have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote the uptake of sustainability among their members through the SUSTOUR project. These organisations are:

- **ABTO** – Belgian Association of Travel Organisers – Belgium
- **ABTTA** – Association of Bulgarian Tour operators and Travel Agent/ Асоциация на българските туроператори и туристически агенти - Bulgaria
- **ALTA** – Association of Latvian Travel Agents and Operators / Latvijas Tūrisma Aģentu un Operatoru Asociācija - Latvia
- **ASR** – Alliance of Independent Travel Companies / Allianz selbständiger Reiseunternehmen – Bundesverband - Germany

- **ATTA** – Adventure Travel Trade Association - Europe
- **DRF** – Association of Danish Travel Agents and Tour Operators / Danmarks Rejsebureau Forening – Denmark
- **DRV** – German Travel Association / Deutscher Reiseverband - Germany
- **EDV** – The Travel Companies / Les Entreprises du Voyages - France
- **ETFL** – Estonian Travel and Tourism Association / Eesti Turismi- ja Reisifirmade Liit - Estonia
- **ETOA** – European Tourism Association - Europe
- **FATTA** – Federated Association of Travel and Tourism Agents Malta - Malta
- **FTO** – Federation of Organised Tourism / Federazione Turismo Organizzato – Italy
- **HATTA** – Hellenic Association of Travel and Tourist Agencies / Σύνδεσμος των εν Ελλάδι Τουριστικών και Ταξιδιωτικών - Greece
- **MUISZ** – Association of Hungarian Travel Agencies / Magyar Utazási Irodák Szövetsége - Hungary
- **NTVA** – National Tourism Business Association / Nacionalinė turizmo verslo asociacija - Lithuania
- **SACKA** – Slovak Association of Travel Agents and Travel Agencies / Slovenskej 6sociácia cestovných kancelárií a cestovných agentúr – Slovakia
- **SETO** – Union of Tour Operating Companies / Syndicat des Entreprises du Tour Operating - France
- **SRF** – Association of Swedish Travel Agents and Tour Operators / Svenska resebyrå- och arrangörsföreningen - Sweden
- **UPAV** – Professional Union of Travel Agencies / Union Professionnelle des Agences de Voyages - Belgium
- **VVR** – Association of Flemish Travel Agencies / Vereniging Vlaamse Reisebureaus – Belgium
- **WKÖ** – Austrian Economic Chamber Trade Association of Travel Agencies / Wirtschaftskammer Österreich Fachverband der Reisebüros – Austria

## 3. Open call for tourism SMEs

### 3.1. What do we offer?

SUSTOUR will provide a grant to selected SMEs in the form of vouchers for services delivered in the frame of a **Technical Support Scheme**.

The Technical Support Scheme offers on the one hand a training, management and **certification programme** to support SMEs towards Travelife **certification** (see point 3.1.1.). On the other hand, it offers a specialised programme open for companies who have already reached (basic) certification or who wish to focus on certain sustainability aspects. This **accelerator programme** supports them with the implementation of innovative practices in their supply chain (see point 3.1.2). There are 4 modules to choose from under this programme (at choice of the SME).

SMEs can apply for one or several support services. They will be invited to indicate in the application form their choice of options in order of preference. Best efforts will be made to offer the selected support services, in so far as this fits within the budget of this project (595.000€).

The Technical Support Scheme will start up once the SMEs have been selected and they signed a Third-Party Beneficiary Agreement (expected end of June, 2022). It will run until June 30, 2023.

*3.1.1. Sustainability certification programme*

Travelife is based on a management system, which supports the effective integration of sustainability in 6 steps to reach certification:

- Engage your company, including the appointment of a sustainability coordinator.
- Carry out a basic evaluation of sustainable aspects in your company.
- Develop and implement a sustainability policy.
- Develop and implement an action plan.
- Report on sustainability activities and achievements.
- Get audited and certified.

SUSTOUR will support the selected SMEs through these 6 steps in the form of free training, coaching and finally auditing leading to two levels of certification (choice of SME):

- **Travelife Partner** – This requires compliance with basic sustainability requirements and reporting. To reach this level, companies can benefit from the support services listed in the table below from 1 to 9.
- **Travelife Certified** – This requires compliance with a more substantial set of sustainability criteria recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and confirmed by third party audit. To reach this level, companies can benefit from the support services listed in the table below from 10 to 15.

The sustainability support services provided under SUSTOUR are listed in the table below. Selected companies that have chosen to reach the Travelife Partner award must complete activities 1 – 9 in the list below. Those that have chosen to reach the Travelife Certified award, must complete all activities 1 to 15 (unless they already have Travelife Partner status, in which case they can skip activities 1 to 9). Only when the company complies with the relevant sustainability criteria and passes the audit, will it obtain the Travelife Partner / Travelife Certified award.

The training and coaching sessions provided in the frame of the certification programme will be delivered, where possible, in English, Croatian, Finnish, French, Dutch, Portuguese, German or Greek. Best efforts will be made to offer them also in other languages.

#	Service	Activity	Support	Commitment (time)	Result
1	Introduction training (face to face or webinar)	Two-day training or webinar. 2 persons per company	Training	2 x 2 days	Training certificates
2	Training of sustainability manager	Online training (self-study), 1-5 persons per company	Self-study with online exam	1 day per person	Personal certificates
3	Baseline assessment	Support to make a baseline assessment and Identify gaps and	Coaching	2 days	Baseline assessment report (PDF)

		improvement opportunities.			
4	Action plan	Support to make an online improvement action plan.	Coaching	5-20 days (including implementation)	Action plan for improvement with tasks, deadlines and designation of responsible persons (PDF).
5	Policy	Development of company policy	Coaching	3 days	Company sustainability policy (PDF)
6	Group coaching	Towards Travelife Partner. Several group meetings.	Coaching	4 days	Coaching report (online)
7	In-house (or online) individual coaching	Towards Travelife Partner.	Coaching	3 days	Coaching report (online)
8	Exchange meetings and events	All selected SMEs are expected to participate in national or thematic exchange meetings and events.	Meetings and events	1-2 days	Certificate of attendance
9	<b>Travelife Partner award</b>	Online audit	Assessment	N/A	Assessment report for Travelife Partner. Travelife Partner award certificate (valid 2 years)
10	Advanced training webinars	4 Webinar participants per company	Trainer	2 days	Certificate of attendance
11	Advanced theme trainings	Additional theme trainings	Online training	3 days	Training certificate
12	Coaching (in-house or online)	Towards Travelife Certified	Coaching	3 days	Coaching report (PDF)
13	Exchange meetings and events	All selected SMEs are expected to participate in national or thematic exchange	Meetings and events	1-2 days	Certificate of attendance

		meetings and events.			
14	Audit	Onsite audit	Auditing and certification	1-2 days	Third party audit report and Travelife Certified certification (valid 2 years)
15	<b>Travelife Certified award</b>	Award ceremony	Event	1 day	Award certificate and event (at travel fairs and general assemblies).

### 3.1.2. Accelerator programme

Companies can opt for additional specialised services offered through separate modules, which will deepen their impact on the supply chain. These services are open for tour operators that are already certified or aim to become certified or tour operators who wish to focus on one aspect only (e.g. carbon management).

The aim of the accelerator programme is to offer SMEs the possibility to jointly develop tools that are suitable for their business. New tools will be piloted and further developed in the frame of the programme.

The support services are à la carte, i.e. selected companies can decide whether they want to benefit from one or several of the modules listed below. Companies need to indicate one preferred module, but best efforts will be made to allow participation in all chosen modules. The support services are also available as a standalone package (no need to engage in the Travelife certification programme).

Each of the accelerator modules will include exchange meetings and events with the other participants of the module (1-2 days).

The accelerator support services will only be available in English.

#	Module	Activity	Type	Commitment (time)	Result
1	Supply chain management programme	Your suppliers (accommodations and partner tour operators) are mapped, registered, trained and assessed on sustainability. Exchange meetings with other SMEs working on supply chain management.	Coach	6 days	More sustainable suppliers supporting the overall sustainability objectives of your company.
2	Carbon management programme	Carbon assessment of travel packages. Creating a more climate friendly product	Carbon expert	6 days	Overall reduction of your carbon impact.

		portfolio. Exchange meetings with other SMEs working on carbon management.			Communication tools to clients. Report on product adaptations. Carbon neutral travel packages.
3	Plastic management programme	Training on plastic management for you and your suppliers. Plastic risk assessment. Reduction strategy. Training and communication to suppliers. Exchange meetings with other SMEs working on plastic management.	Tourism and plastic expert	6 days	Company specific plastic strategy. Assessment of packages. Communication to clients. Report on product adaptations.
4	Certification of shore excursions	Training for suppliers. Excursion suppliers assessment. Certification of your excursions. Exchange meetings with other SMEs in your destination.	Sustainability expert and trainers	6 days	Certified excursions promoted by international cruise lines.

### 3.2. What are the benefits for tour operators and travel agents?

The SUSTOUR project will provide innovative training courses, peer learning and knowledge transfer for SMEs and start-ups in the tourism sector. You will be able to benefit from our Technical Support Scheme, which includes the following elements:

- A capacity building programme through a specific blended training programme including online and face to face sessions;
- A sustainability management implementation programme leading to certification;
- An acceleration programme aimed at developing a specific innovation strategy to implement sustainability solutions (including plastic, carbon and supply chain management as well as sustainable shore excursions) - for a selection of participating SMEs.

The strengthening of the capacities of SMEs in sustainability will also take place through the knowledge transfer between companies with sustainability best experiences, such as:

- Meeting with leading innovators, providers, experts;
- Improve supply chain and cross-sector collaborations;
- Entering international networks;
- Being included in promotional and dissemination activities at both regional, national and EU level.

### 3.3. Who can apply?

Your company is eligible to apply for technical support under the SUSTOUR project, if it meets all of the following eligibility criteria.

Your company:

- Has an economic activity of travel agency, tour operator or other reservation service and related activities (NACE 79);
- is a micro, small or medium-sized enterprise (SME), as defined in the EU recommendation 2003/361, having an independent legal status (consortiums will be excluded). The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises consists of enterprises which:
  - employ fewer than 250 persons; **and**
  - have either an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million **or** an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.

Enterprise category	Headcount: annual work unit (AWU)	Annual turnover	or	Annual balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ EUR 50 million	or	≤ EUR 43 million
Small	< 50	≤ EUR 10 million	or	≤ EUR 10 million
Micro	< 10	≤ EUR 2 million	or	≤ EUR 2 million

In the application form you will be asked to provide the data for staff headcount and indicate range of turnover for the years 2019 and 2020. The eligibility of your company will be determined by the 2020 data.

- is established in an EU Member State or a third country participating in the COSME programme: Iceland, the UK, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania or Turkey.
- has not received alternative funding for support services provided under another project of the COSME TOURCOOP programme, notably Tourban, CEnTOUR, ETGG2030, TouriSME and EU ECO-TANDEM;
- has not been prosecuted in the last 5 years for legal violations in relation to health, sustainability, human resources and taxation matters.

### 3.4. How to apply?

Are you interested in benefiting from the SUSTOUR Technical Support Scheme? Then we invite you to complete the electronic application form (see steps described below). A template version of the application form is available for consultation in the annex of this document.

Before submitting your application, please note the following:

- Applications must be submitted in English;
- Applications must be submitted electronically (see steps below). Applications not submitted through the indicated electronic submission tool are ineligible;
- Only one application per applicant is allowed. If more than one proposal per applicant is received, only the last proposal that has been submitted will be considered;
- Only applications that meet all the eligibility criteria will be considered (see 3.3.).

Applicants will be able to request clarifications related to the open call, by sending an e-mail to: [sustour@travelife.info](mailto:sustour@travelife.info). Answers provided to applicants will be published on the call website [www.travelife.info/sustour](http://www.travelife.info/sustour) to ensure that the same information is available to all applicants.

**Please follow these steps to successfully submit your application:**

1. To start your application, please go to the [website](https://www.travelife.info/sustour/?menu=call-for-smes) (<https://www.travelife.info/sustour/?menu=call-for-smes>), register and you will be directed to our application form.
2. We create a (free) Travelife account for you and save your edits, so you can take your time working on your application. To come back to your application, just log in via the green form on the [website](https://www.travelife.info/sustour/?menu=call-for-smes) (<https://www.travelife.info/sustour/?menu=call-for-smes>) and when you are ready, submit your application online.

The **deadline for submission of electronic applications is Tuesday 10 May 2022 at 17h00 CET**. Proposals sent after this deadline will not be considered.

### 3.5. What is expected from participants?

As part of the Technical Support Scheme the following commitment is expected from the selected SMEs:

- Your commitment to improve your SMEs sustainability performance in energy conservation, carbon management, waste management, water management, sustainable mobility, green procurement, social standards etc. up to at least Travelife Partner award level or one of the accelerator modules.
- Your active participation in the support activities you have committed to. Non-participation to the support activities may lead to a decrease or termination of the grant.
- Report on data that will allow us to monitor your sustainability performance (most will happen via the online Travelife reporting system).

- Report on the performance of your service provider (trainer, coach, auditor). We will provide you with a simple online feedback template to be filled out.
- Allow us to access and use such data, and publicly disseminate the results (anonymously).
- Provide us with basic information of your company such as logo, description and contact information to publicly disseminate on our website.
- Give visibility to the SUSTOUR project and of EU funding while participating in the programme. We will provide you with a standard template showcasing the SUSTOUR logo and EU COSME emblem and disclaimer to be visibly placed in your promotional material (e.g. website). Indications for dissemination on social media will also be provided (hashtags, keywords, etc.).

Non-compliance with the above points may lead to a decrease or termination of the grant.

### 3.6. Additional information

- **Do I need to pay anything for participating in the support programme?**

All participating SMEs will receive the EU co-financing. SUSTOUR will additionally cover the remaining contribution for all SMEs that are members of a SUSTOUR partner or supporting travel association. Please refer to point 2.3. listing the project partner and supporting travel associations.

For all other SMEs an own contribution is required, ranging between 200€ to 400€ depending on the size of the company in terms of number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE)<sup>1</sup> staff:

Number of FTE staff	≤ 25 FTEs	26-100 FTEs	>100 FTEs
SME own contribution	€200	€300	€400

- **I am already a member of Travelife – can I get a refund of my membership fee?**

No, SUSTOUR promotes the uptake of sustainability practices through certification or improving sustainability performance in specific areas. If you are already a Travelife member, you will be able to benefit from the Technical Support Scheme, but your company will not be retroactively refunded the membership fees.

- **Is it possible to apply for both the certification programme and the accelerator programme?**

In principle yes. You can choose to obtain support for certification (Travelife Partner and/or Travelife Certified) as well as support provided under the accelerator programme (one or several modules). You will be able to indicate your choice in the application form.

Best efforts will be made to offer selected SMEs the support services they have chosen, in so far as the sum of all support services to be provided fits within the budget of this project (595.000€).

<sup>1</sup> The calculation of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff is an employee's scheduled hours divided by the employer's hours for a full-time workweek. When an employer has a 40-hour workweek, employees who are scheduled to work 40 hours per week are 1 FTEs. Employees scheduled to work 20 hours per week are 0,5 FTEs.

With this in mind, we invite you to choose the support services you would like to benefit from and list them in order of preference.

When making your choice, please consider the time required to follow all the support activities proposed under the certification / accelerator programme (see ‘time commitment’ for each activity in the table under points 3.1.1 and 3.1.2).

- **Is it possible to pick and choose support services?**

No. Once you have made a choice to benefit from the certification programme and/or the accelerator programme (one or several modules), you are only eligible for the support services provided in the frame of the selected programme(s) and module(s).

- **How does the voucher system work?**

You will be selected for the right to obtain certain services for which you obtain virtual vouchers. The services will be provided by service providers approved and trained by the SUSTOUR project. Once the service has been completed successfully you can deliver the virtual voucher to the service provider who will be paid by the SUSTOUR project.

- **What is the amount of grant I can expect to receive?**

Selected SMEs will receive virtual vouchers to ‘pay’ for a number of support services. There is no money value on the vouchers.

As an indication, the value of support services are as follows:

- 1.650€ if you choose to obtain the Travelife Partner award;
- 3.150€ if you choose to become Travelife Certified;
- 400€- 3.000€ if you choose one or several modules under the accelerator programme.

No single SME will obtain vouchers for support services in excess of 6.000€. In case of more services taken than 6.000€ the SME needs to contribute the additional amount from its own resources.

- **What if I wish to engage in more activities than initially applied for?**

If needed, there is certain flexibility to add additional activities. This however depends on the overall remaining budget. Such flexibility will be assessed case by case, according to your company’s needs and the overall demand for such services.

- **What happens if travelling is not possible due to COVID-19 or other restrictions?**

In such case all activities will be provided online up to the moment face-to-face meetings will be possible again.

- **What is the timeframe for the application and implementation of the support programme?**

Once the call for SME applications has been launched, you will have 2 months to apply. The deadline for application is Tuesday 10 May 2022 at 17h00 CET.

The selection of successful SMEs and signature of a Third-Party Beneficiary Agreement will take approximately one month. The list of selected SMEs is expected to be published by 7 June 2022 on the SUSTOUR website.

The support programme is then foreseen to start end of June 2022 and will run until June 30, 2023.

- **Can I apply later for this support programme?**

No, there will only be one call round. If you would like to profit from the scheme you will have to apply before the deadline (10 May 2022, 17h00 CET). During the implementation we will accommodate your internal planning, however all activities must be concluded before 30 June 2023.

- **Can we apply as a group of companies?**

You have to apply as a legal entity. If there are more individual companies under the legal (holding) company they will all benefit, to the extent that the company still respects the definition of an SME (see point 3.3). In such case it is not needed to apply individually for each company. Groups can also be international, but only the companies established in an eligible country will be entitled to receive support (see point 3.3).

- **In what language will the support services be provided?**

Training sessions and coaching provided in the frame of the **certification programme** will be delivered, where possible, in either English, Croatian, Finnish, French, Dutch, Portuguese, German or Greek. A good level of comprehension of one of these languages is required. Best efforts will be made to propose training and coaching in other European languages.

Most online trainings, tools, standards and other materials required for Travelife certification are available in multiple languages such as English, French, Croatian, German, Danish, Dutch, Spanish and sometimes even other languages.

The support services provided in the frame of the **accelerator programme** will only be available in English.

## 4. Evaluation and selection

### 4.1. Evaluation and selection process

Each application will be assessed by 2 evaluators designated by the SUSTOUR project partners.

The evaluators will review and score each application independently against the eligibility criteria (see point 3.3. before) and the evaluation criteria (see point 4.2. hereafter).

The evaluators will then review the applications together and agree jointly on the scoring for each applicant.

A selection committee, composed of three representatives designated by ECEAT, ECTAA and Futouris, will select the best scoring applications:

- that want to reach Travelife Partner award;
- that want to reach Travelife Certified award;
- that want to participate in the various modules of the accelerator programme;

The minimum number of SMEs selected is 175, but more companies can be selected in case it fits within the available support budget. Some applicants may fall in more than one of the above categories (i.e. they want to reach Travelife Certified award and participate in the accelerator programme).

Given that grants to SMEs under the SUSTOUR project are co-financed by project partners (25%), the selection committee will select, where possible, at least 10 applicants from each of the project partner countries. The countries are Croatia, Finland, Netherlands, Germany, Greece and Portugal.

For SMEs established in other eligible countries (see point 3.3), every attempt will be made to ensure appropriate distribution per country regarding SME support.

## 4.2. Evaluation criteria

Evaluators will evaluate applications against the following criteria:

### (a) Eligibility

Applications will be checked against the eligibility criteria (see point 3.3.).

If any one of the eligibility criteria is not met, your SME will be disqualified.

### (b) Affiliation

If your SME is affiliated to a project partner association ([UHPA](#), [SMAL](#), [ANVR](#) or [APAVT](#)) or a supporting travel association that has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SUSTOUR to promote sustainability among their members ([WKÖ](#), [ABTO](#), [ABTTA](#), [ETFL](#), [EDV-SETO](#), [DRF](#), [DRV](#), [HATTA](#), [MUISZ](#), [FTO](#), [ALTA](#), [NTVA](#), [FATTA](#), [SACKA](#), [SRF](#), [ETOA](#), [ASR](#), [ATTA](#), [VVR](#) and [UPAV](#)), you are entitled to apply for 100% free participation in the support scheme.

If your SME is not affiliated to a project partner/supporting travel association, then you will have to pay an own contribution (between 200€ - 400€, depending on the size of the company).

Scores – None, as this only determines whether you are entitled to 100% free participation or whether you need to pay an own contribution.

Minimum threshold: None

### (c) Existing involvement in sustainability

SMEs will be assessed on the following existing sustainability practices implemented:

- Designation of a sustainability coordinator
- Formulation of a sustainable policy or management plan
- Assessment of the carbon footprint of the SME's activities
- Promotion of a carbon offset system
- Preferential green suppliers policy
- Promotion of sustainable mobility
- Training to staff on sustainability issues

Score of 0,5 points for every sustainability practice implemented.
Minimum threshold: None. Score 0 does not disqualify your SME, as we welcome all interested SMEs starting from the bottom in terms of sustainability.

**(d) Ambition**

SMEs will be assessed on their vision to become more sustainable and how to achieve this. Criteria for assessment will include:

A. Vision of the SME:

- How does the SME envisage sustainable tourism in its company?
- What impact does the SME expect to have on suppliers, destinations, consumers?
- What is the relevance of the SUSTOUR project (certification, sustainable shore excursions, carbon and plastic management) in relation to the SME’s vision?
- Depth of commitment

B. How to achieve this vision:

- What means does the SME plan to engage to achieve this sustainable tourism vision in terms of human resources, financial investment, processes, etc.?

Up to 8 points for question A (vision of sustainable tourism)
Up to 5 points for question B (means to implement the sustainable tourism vision)
Minimum threshold: A score of less than 5 in total for the 2 questions will disqualify your application.

**(e) Commitment to certification**

SMEs that opt to become certified, will be assessed on the level of commitment to complete all the steps required towards certification to Travelife Partner status or Travelife Certified status.

Criteria to be assessed:

- Willingness to participate in the training and coaching activities as described in table 3.1.1 and/or 3.1.2;
- Willingness to produce the outputs required to go through the 6 step management process;
- Willingness to get audited for certification;
- Plans to continue (certification) at own costs after the termination of the scheme.

Up to 8 points
Minimum threshold: A score of less than 5 will disqualify your application.

**(f) Commitment to further sustainability practices**

SMEs that opt to participate in one or more modules of the accelerator programme (supply chain management, carbon management, plastic management, shore excursion certification), will be assessed on their level of commitment to improve their sustainability performance and their impact. The criteria to be assessed include:

- Interest in improving sustainability performance;
- Significance / impact on suppliers, destinations, consumers;
- Depth of the commitment.

Up to 5 points per module
Minimum threshold: A score of less than 2 for a module will disqualify your application for that module.

**4.3. Selection of SMEs and reserve list**

Once the evaluation process is completed, the results of the assessments will be communicated to each candidate by e-mail, expected by 7 of June 2022. You will be informed about the results of the selection procedure:

- **Selection:** The application was successful and you are invited to sign the Third-Party Beneficiary Agreement;
- **No selection but on reserve list:** The application was successful but you scored insufficient points. You will remain on a reserve list in case some selected companies decide to withdraw from the support programme;
- **No selection:** The application was rejected on grounds that either the SME (i) did not meet the eligibility criteria, (ii) did not score sufficient points to be qualified for financing, or (iii) did not provide all the information necessary to evaluate the application properly.

Selected SMEs must sign a Third-Party Beneficiary Agreement within 10 calendar days after admission, under penalty of revocation.

The final list of selected SMEs will be published on the SUSTOUR website by 7 of June 2022.

**5. How to contact us**

For more information on the SUSTOUR project or the Call for SME Application, please feel free to send an e-mail to: [sustour@travelife.info](mailto:sustour@travelife.info).

Information provided to applicants on the Call for SME Application will be published on the call [website \(https://www.travelife.info/sustour/?menu=call-for-smes\)](https://www.travelife.info/sustour/?menu=call-for-smes) to ensure that the same information is available to all applicants.

## Annex I – Application form template

Note: This application form is only provided for consultation purposes. Applicants must complete the electronic application form available from the call website [www.travelife.info/sustour](http://www.travelife.info/sustour) (see application instructions under point 3.4.).

### Section 1: Company information

#	Field name	Field value	Field type
1	Name of your company		Text box
2	Country	All countries	Single choice list
3	Address		Text box
4	Company website		Text box
5	VAT identification number		Text box
6	Legal registration number		Text box
7	Contact person first name		Text box
8	Contact person last name		Text box
9	Contact person title	Mr / Ms / No title	Single choice list
10	Contact person e-mail		Text box
11	Contact person telephone number		Text box
12	Contact person position		Text box

### Section 2: SME eligibility

#	Field name	Field value	Field Type
1	Does your company have an economic activity of travel agency, tour operator or other reservation service and related activities?	Yes / No	Single choice list
2	What was the number of Full Time Equivalent employees in your company in 2020?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Micro: ≤ 10 staff members</li> <li>- Small: &gt; 10 and ≤ 50 staff members</li> <li>- Medium: &gt; 50 and ≤ 250 staff members</li> <li>- Large: &gt; 250 staff members</li> </ul>	Single choice list
3	What was the number of Full Time Equivalent employees in your company in 2019?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Micro: ≤ &lt;10 staff members</li> <li>- Small: &gt; 10 and ≤ &lt;50 staff members</li> </ul>	Single choice list

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medium: &gt; 50 and ≤ &gt;250 staff members</li> <li>- Large: &gt; 250 staff members</li> </ul>	
4	What was the annual turnover of your company in 2020?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Micro: ≤ € 2 m turnover</li> <li>- Small: &gt; € 2 m and ≤ € 10 m turnover</li> <li>- Medium: &gt; € 10 m and ≤ € 50 m turnover</li> <li>- Large: &gt; € 50 m turnover</li> </ul>	Single choice list
5	What was the annual turnover of your company in 2019?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Micro: ≤ € 2 m turnover</li> <li>- Small: &gt; € 2 m and ≤ € 10 m turnover</li> <li>- Medium: &gt; € 10 m and ≤ € 50 m turnover</li> <li>- Large: &gt; € 50 m turnover</li> </ul>	Single choice list
6	Has your company received alternative funding for support services provided under another project of the COSME TOURCOOP programme (Tourban, CEnTOUR, ETGG2030, TouriSME and EU ECO-TANDEM)?	Yes / No	Single choice list
7	Has your company been prosecuted in the last 5 years for legal violations in the relation to health, sustainability, human resources, or taxation matters?	Yes / No	Single choice list

### Section 3: Affiliations

	Field name	Field value	Field type
1	Are you a member of one or more of the following associations, if yes which one(s)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ ABTO - Belgium</li> <li>➤ ABTTA – Bulgaria</li> <li>➤ ALTA - Latvia</li> <li>➤ ANVR - Netherlands</li> <li>➤ APAVT – Portugal</li> <li>➤ ASR – Germany</li> <li>➤ ATTA – Adventure Travel Trade Association</li> <li>➤ DRF - Denmark</li> <li>➤ DRV – Germany</li> <li>➤ EDV - France</li> <li>➤ ETFL – Estonia</li> <li>➤ ETOA – Europe</li> <li>➤ FATTA – Malta</li> <li>➤ FTO - Italy</li> <li>➤ HATTA – Greece</li> </ul>	Multiple choice list

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ MUISZ – Hungary</li> <li>➤ NTVA - Lithuania</li> <li>➤ SACKA – Slovakia</li> <li>➤ SETO - France</li> <li>➤ SMAL – Finland</li> <li>➤ SRF – Sweden</li> <li>➤ UHPA – Croatia</li> <li>➤ UPAV - Belgium</li> <li>➤ VVR - Belgium</li> <li>➤ WKÖ – Austria</li> <li>➤ Other</li> <li>➤ None</li> </ul>	
--	--	---	--

**Section 4: Existing involvement in sustainability**

Have you already implemented sustainable practices in your company?

#	Field name	Field value	Field type
1	Designation of a sustainability coordinator	Yes / No Please explain briefly (max 3-5 sentences)	Single choice list Text box
2	Formulation of a sustainable policy or management plan	Yes / No Please explain briefly (max 3-5 sentences)	Single choice list Text box
3	Have you ever assessed the carbon footprint of your activities?	Yes / No Please explain briefly (max 3-5 sentences)	Single choice list Text box
4	Promoting of a carbon offset system	Yes / No Please explain briefly (max 3-5 sentences)	Single choice list Text box
5	Preferential green suppliers policy	Yes / No Please explain briefly (max 3-5 sentences)	Single choice list Text box
6	Promoting sustainable mobility	Yes / No Please explain briefly (max 3-5 sentences)	Single choice list Text box
7	Training to staff on sustainability issues	Yes / No Please explain briefly (max 3-5 sentences)	Single choice list Text box
8	Other sustainability practices	Yes / No Please explain briefly (max 3-5 sentences)	Single choice list Text box

**Section 5: Ambition**

#	Criteria	Field type
1	Please describe briefly how you envisage sustainable tourism in your company? What is your vision? (200 words max.)	Text box
2	Please describe the means (human resources, financial) you will plan to engage to implement your sustainable tourism policy? (200 words max.)	Text box

**Section 6: Choice of support services**

You can choose to obtain support for certification (Travelife Partner and/or Travelife Certified) as well as support provided under the acceleration programme (one or several modules). Best efforts will be made to offer selected SMEs all the support services they have chosen, in so far as the sum of all support services to be provided fits within the budget of this project (595.000€). With this in mind, we invite you to indicate the support services in order of your preference.

#	Field name	Field value	Field type
1	What is your preferred option for support? <i>Only one option is possible.</i>	Travelife Partner award Travelife Certified award Carbon management programme Plastic management programme Supply chain management programme Certification of shore excursions	Single choice list
2	What other options for support would you be interested in? <i>Several options are possible, please indicate in order of preference</i>	Travelife Partner award Travelife Certified award Carbon management programme Plastic management programme Supply chain management programme Certification of shore excursions	Multiple choice list

**Section 7: Commitment to support programme**

You have selected the following option(s) of support services (not listed in order of your preference). Please reply to the following questions for each of the selected support services.

Sub-section 7: Commitment to sustainability certification – Travelife Partner award

This section should only be completed by SMEs, who have not yet obtained the Travelife Partner award and are interested to obtain Travelife Partner. Travelife Partner award requires compliance with basic sustainability requirements and reporting.

Are you willing to commit to the following?

#	Field name	Field value	Field type
1	Completion of the Travelife online basic training by the (to be appointed) sustainability coordinator.	Yes / No	Single choice list
2	Completion of the Travelife basic sustainability training of at least 2 other staff members.	Yes / No	Single choice list
3	Attendance of training sessions with at least 2 staff members. The training will be provided online or onsite.	Yes / No	Single choice list
4	Allow an in-house consultant to support you with the implementation within your company and completion of your reporting.	Yes / No	Single choice list
5	Join group coaching sessions of each 3-4 hours (face to face or online). See details under chapter 3.1.1.	Yes / No	Single choice list
6	Produce the outputs required to go through the 6 step management process (baseline assessment, policy statement, action plan & implementation, monitoring & reporting). See details under chapter 3.1.1.	Yes / No	Single choice list
7	Attendance of national or thematic exchange meetings and events.	Yes / No	Single choice list
8	Reach Travelife Partner award through online audit.	Yes / No	Single choice list
9	Intent to continue (certification) at own costs after the termination of the scheme.	Yes / No	Single choice list

Sub-section 7: Commitment to sustainability certification – Travelife Certified award

This section should only be completed by SMEs, which are interested in getting Travelife Certified status. This is the highest level of certification and requires compliance with a more substantial set of

sustainability criteria recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and confirmed by a third party audit.

Companies opting for this package could be already at the Travelife Partner level or could start from the beginning and reach the Certified level via the Travelife Partner level.

Are you willing to commit to the following?

#	Criteria	Field value	Filed type
1	Completion of the Travelife online basic training by the (to be appointed) sustainability coordinator.	Yes / No	Single choice list
2	Completion of the Travelife basic sustainability training of at least 2 other staff members.	Yes / No	Single choice list
3	Attendance of training sessions with at least 2 staff members. The training will be provided online or onsite.	Yes / No	Single choice list
4	Allow an in-house consultant to support you with the implementation within your company and completion of your reporting.	Yes / No	Single choice list
5	Join group coaching sessions of each 3-4 hours (face to face or online). See details under chapter 3.1.1.	Yes / No	Single choice list
6	Participation in advanced training webinars and theme trainings.	Yes / No	Single choice list
7	Produce the outputs required to go through the 6 step management process (baseline assessment, policy statement, action plan & implementation, monitoring & reporting). See details under chapter 3.1.1.	Yes / No	Single choice list
8	Attendance of national or thematic exchange meetings and events.	Yes / No	Single choice list
9	Reach Travelife Certified award through an independent auditor.	Yes / No	Single choice list
10	Intent to continue (certification) at own costs after the termination of the scheme.	Yes / No	Single choice list

Sub-section 7: Commitment to carbon management programme

#	Criteria	Field values	Field types
1	How many different travel packages do you have?		Text box
2	How many different packages do you sell per year (2019)?		Text box
3	Are you offering carbon off-set already?		Text box
4	Are you interested to provide carbon off-set within the price? Please motivate.		Text box
5	Are you interested to publish the carbon information with your package information? Please motivate.		Text box

Sub-section 7: Commitment to plastic management programme

#	Criteria	Field values	Field types
1	Are you interested to maximize plastic waste reduction? Please motivate.		Text box
2	Are you interested to create awareness and train your suppliers? Please motivate.		Text box
3	Are you interested to enforce plastic waste reduction among your suppliers? Please motivate.		Text box
4	Are you interested to involve your clients? Please motivate.		Text box

Sub-section 7: Commitment to supply chain management programme

#	Criteria	Field values	Field types
1	Are you interested in making your supply chain more sustainable? Please motivate		Text box
2	Please provide information on the number and type of suppliers?		Text box
3	How many destinations do you work with? Provide information on them.		Text box

**Sub-section 7: Commitment to certification of shore excursions**

#	Criteria	Field values	Field types
1	Are you interested to have your excursions certified? Please motivate.		Text box
2	Are you willing to comply to the certification standards for activities to be agreed with cruise lines? Please motivate.		Text box
3	Are you interested to work jointly with other companies in your destination? Please motivate.		Text box
4	With how many cruise lines are you working together?		Text box
5	How many clients did you have in 2019 (pre-Covid)?		Text box

**Section 8: Consent to privacy policy**

SUSTOUR privacy policy: SUSTOUR is responsible for the processing of the personal data provided when completing the application form. You are informed that these data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 (GDPR), which includes the corrigendum of 23 May 2018, and other applicable rules, for the management of SUSTOUR project activities and to send other content-related electronic communications, under the protection given by your consent when applying. Personal and sensitive company data provided will only be used in the framework of the evaluation process of the present call. We will store such data until these are no longer necessary for us to process in this framework, and it will not be rented, sold neither transferred to third parties.

Do you agree to the SUSTOUR privacy policy?

- Yes
- No

**Section 9: Declaration of honour**

I certify that all information contained in this application form is correct to the best of my knowledge and that I am fully aware of the content of application guidelines as published on the SUSTOUR website [www.travelife.info/sustour](http://www.travelife.info/sustour).

Name:

Date:

Electronic signature:



The content of this publication represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.