



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **FAIR TRADE IN TOURISM SOUTH AFRICA FIRST STANDARD IN AFRICA TO BE RECOGNIZED BY GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COUNCIL**

Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) was today one of ten sustainable tourism standards globally and the first in Africa to achieve formal recognition by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).

The GSTC is a global initiative spearheaded by the UN Foundation dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism efforts around the world.

The GSTC identified 144 sustainable tourism standards in use around the world, of which 30 applied for recognition during 2011. Each standard went through a rigorous review and authorization procedure and are considered equivalent to the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. The Criteria are the worldwide, holistic definition of sustainable tourism incorporating cultural, socio-economic, environmental and sustainability management criteria.

Leading Travel and Tourism corporations including Amadeus, Melia, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd, Sabre Holdings and TUI Travel have publicly committed to promoting sustainable tourism products and services recognized by the GSTC.

According to Leilani Latimer, Director, Sustainability Initiatives, Sabre Holdings, "Travellers and agencies need simple tools to find and purchase sustainable travel offerings. The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria helps by harmonizing the numerous global certification programs in the marketplace to provide travellers with clear and trustworthy sustainable travel choices."

Jennifer Seif, FTTSA Executive Director stated "FTTSA is very proud to achieve GSTC recognition as this affirms our status as a leading pioneer for sustainable tourism in Africa. GSTC recognition benefits businesses certified by FTTSA by affording preferential access to distribution channels."

South Africa's Minimum Standard for Sustainable Tourism (SABS 1162) was closely modelled on the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria and other examples of best practice.

## ENDS

### The first GSTC-Recognized standards are:

- Bundesministerium für Land - und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft (BMLFUW)'s **Austrian Ecolabel for Tourism (Österreichisches Umweltzeichen)**
- Costa Rica Tourist Board (ICT)'s **Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST)**
- Ecotourism Australia's **Advanced EcoCertification**
- Ecotourism Ireland's **Ecotourism Ireland Label**
- European Ecotourism Knowledge Network's **European Ecotourism Labelling Standard (EETLS)**
- **Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA)**
- Instituto de Turismo Responsable's **Biosphere Hotels**
- Japan Ecolodge Association's **Environmentally sustainable accommodations standard**
- Rainforest Alliance's **Standard for Tourism Operations**
- Sustainable Travel International's **Sustainable Tourism Eco-Certification Program (STEP)**

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### About FTTSA

FTTSA is a South African based non-profit initiative, working to promote equitable and sustainable tourism development. Since 2003, FTTSA has been operating a destination-specific certification programme, based on global principles of Fair Trade as well as local development imperatives to reduce poverty and inequality within the post-apartheid context.

To date, over 60 tourism businesses throughout South Africa, ranging from luxury hotels and safari lodges to community-based micro-enterprises, have qualified for FTTSA certification. This ground-breaking certification programme is the first of its kind in the world, focusing strongly on labour and socio-economic standards in addition to environmental performance. It is based on adherence to specific criteria including fair wages and working conditions, fair distribution of benefits, ethical business practice, and respect for human rights, culture and the environment. For more information visit [www.fairtourismza.org.za](http://www.fairtourismza.org.za)

### About GSTC

The GSTC works to expand understanding of and access to sustainable tourism practices; helps identify and generate markets for sustainable tourism; educates about and advocates for a set of universal principles, as defined by the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. The Criteria, a set of voluntary principles that provide a framework for the sustainability of tourism businesses across the globe, is the keystone of this initiative. For more information visit <http://new.gstccouncil.org>

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