



IBEROSTAR ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS OF THE IBEROSTAR SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS 2023

- *The ceremony for the first edition of the Iberostar Sustainability Awards took place on September 21, 2023.*
- *Seven finalists from the DACH region were nominated in the categories "Best Sustainability Initiative Tour Operator" and "Best Sustainability Initiative Travel Agency".*
- *German travel companies FairAway Travel, Fairweg and LCC Grünes Reisebüro, as well as the Swiss Hotelplan Group, were the winners of this first edition.*
- *In addition to the winners in the categories "Best Sustainability Initiative Tour Operator" and "Best Sustainability Initiative Travel Agency", a special award was presented in each category.*



Photo Credit: Christian Wyrwa

Palma de Mallorca, September 22, 2023: For the first time, the Iberostar Sustainability Awards were presented at the fwf Congress in Valencia on September 21, 2023. Travel agencies and tour operators in the DACH region were given the opportunity to present their initiatives to **promote sustainable tourism** and demonstrate their achievements on the global stage.

Iberostar Group established the sustainability awards to honor the commitment of travel companies that promote **environmental protection** and the **empowerment of local communities** within the tourism sector, while also involving them in the **consultation process**. Increasing the visibility of industry initiatives is part of the vision of the Iberostar Group, to be a driving force in building a responsible tourism model and aims to encourage other stakeholders to take action.

During this year's **fvw | Travel Talk Congress in Valencia**, four tourism companies from Germany and Switzerland received awards for their initiatives. The award ceremony was opened by **Gloria Fluxà** (Iberostar Group Vice-Chairman & Chief Sustainability Officer). During her speech, Fluxà highlighted the development potential of the hotel industry, and outlined why all tourism stakeholders need to collaborate to develop sustainability strategies to learn from and with each other.

"Congratulations to the winners of the very first Iberostar Sustainability Awards. These companies have embedded sustainability at the heart of their mission, proving that a sustainable business approach is both feasible and profitable. Through these Awards we showcase the importance of sharing best practices, and of collaboration. Collective action will be the only way forward for a brighter future for our industry".

Winners of the Iberostar Sustainability Awards 2023

The winners prevailed against a large number of applicants with outstanding initiatives and convinced an international jury composed of prominent tourism and sustainability experts. In addition to the trophy, winners received a budget ranging from **5,000 to 50,000 euros**, depending on the category, to launch responsible tourism campaigns in collaboration with the Iberostar Group. All the winners are also invited to a **sustainability-focused educational trip**.

- As "**Best Sustainability Initiative Tour Operator**", the **Hotelplan Group** impressed the jury with a wide range of projects, advanced in cooperation with its dynamic tour operator, vtours. The group supports its partner hotels in the certification process as sustainable accommodations and the **sustainable development of local vacation destinations**, which is beginning to yield results in its current project in Turkey. Stakeholders in the destination are advised on topics such as renewable energy, water management, and plastic reduction, and loans are provided to enable partners to make major investments to facilitate the path to certification.
- The winner of the "**Best Sustainability Initiative Travel Agency**" category was **FAIRWEG®**. The company established the **FAIRWEG® Score**, based on Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) standards, and classifies accommodation into **categories based on 12 sustainable criteria**. This continually updated data is passed on to tour operators, travel agencies, and destinations via a B2B licensing model to make sustainable alternatives visible and establish an industry standard.

Special awards

To take into account the broad spectrum of applicants within the two categories, Iberostar awarded two additional special prizes.

- As the winner in the category "**Travel Agency Special Prize**", the **LCC Grünes Reisebüro** impressed judges with a travel portfolio that **exclusively includes GSTC-certified tour operators and hotels**. During a customized consultation appointment, additional recommendations for climate-efficient flight options, offsetting options, and purchasing Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) are offered to reduce trips' CO2 emissions.
- The "**Tour Operator Special Prize**" winner was **FairAway Travel** for its **Fair Travel Scale**, which makes the environmental footprint of each customer trip visible. The scale maps the environmental, social, and socio-economic impact of each trip to playfully encourage travelers to adopt a more sustainable way of traveling. In addition, all CO2 emissions from the trip are offset, even if organized by the customer.

Jury and background

The applicants were evaluated by the four-member jury of tourism and sustainability experts: the external jurors **Sören Hartmann** (President of the German tourism industry association BTW) and **Prof. Dr. Harald Zeiss** (Harz University of Applied Sciences and Chairman of the Sustainability Committee DRV) as well as the two people responsible for sustainability at Iberostar Group, **Gloria Fluxà** (Vice-Chairman & Chief Sustainability Officer) and **Sandra Benbeniste** (Director, Destination Stewardship).

The wide range of applications and different levers of the initiatives impressed the jury. Sandra Benbeniste said: "We are pleased to see the increasing commitment and significant measurable actions of leading tour operators and travel agencies, which are inspiring others. More and more travelers are choosing companies that align with their values and need clear information to make their decisions. The winning companies contribute to creating the necessary transparency, making sustainability an important selection criterion when booking vacations."

The "Wave of Change" movement, founded in 2017 by Iberostar Group, has made significant progress over the past six years. To date, specific projects have been implemented, such as the first **fully electrified hotels**. With the introduction of **AI in the kitchens of 48 hotels**, food waste has been reduced by **28%**, and its implementation in all hotels is planned by the end of 2023. The **3R teams**, dedicated exclusively to **waste management** in hotels, are already active in 80% of Iberostar's properties. With all these measures, a **10% reduction of CO2 emissions and energy savings of 5%** could be achieved.

The most important goals of the company's **2030 Agenda** can be summarized in three key points: Iberostar aims to be **waste-free by 2025**, source **100% of its fish and seafood from responsible sources**, and be **CO2-neutral by 2030**. Likewise, by 2030, the health of ecosystems at Iberostar locations will be improved, thus enhancing the tourism quality of the destinations. Iberostar is continuously working to achieve its ambitious goals and now has **seven of its own coral nurseries** in the Caribbean, **three mangrove nurseries** in the Dominican Republic, and **four coastal dune nurseries** in Mexico.

Essential for the success of the joint mission to establish responsible tourism is continuous **networking and exchange**. For this reason, Iberostar maintains close contacts with **international networks and organizations, institutions, and government bodies**. With the Iberostar Sustainability Awards, another platform has been created to invite more travel companies to join this progressive dialogue.

*Supporting materials and photos can be found under this [link](#).

About Iberostar Group

Iberostar Group is a 100% family-owned Spanish multinational company that boasts over 65 years' experience in the tourism industry and business origins dating back to 1877. Its main line of business is **Iberostar Hotels & Resorts**, whose portfolio includes over 100 four and five-star hotels in 16 countries, including the hotels under the Iberostar Beachfront Resorts brand*. The Group has become an international benchmark by promoting a responsible tourism business model focused on caring for people and the environment. The [Wave of Change](#) movement, a pioneering and innovative initiative from Iberostar, reflects the company's specific commitment to the environment and oceans, and its efforts to promote these concerns to society as a whole.

With sustainability as the driving force and lever behind the business, the company places the circular economy at the center of its strategy and is working on its own **2030 Agenda** to be waste-free by 2025, carbon-neutral by 2030, 100% responsible in its seafood supply chain by 2025, and to improve the health of the ecosystems that surround its hotels, among other goals.

Iberostar Group has a global team with more than 30,000 people of 95 nationalities. Thanks to this pool of talent, the company is a leader in quality and boosts differentiation in the customer experience through constant product innovation and digital commitment.

*The portfolio of Iberostar Beachfront Resorts exclude Iberostar's interests in Cuba.

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