Greetings for the New Year!

Sustainability for Tour operators: Achieving the Travelife Partner Status

Sustainability in business operations should be at the core of every venture. This involves having operations that are economically sound, socially acceptable and environmentally friendly. It is this notion that guided the partnership between EK, KATO and Travelife, that led to the launching of the Kenya Tour Operators Sustainability Program in 2015.

The program is aimed at preparing tour operator companies for sustainability recognition through the Travelife Certification and most importantly, to increase their competitiveness in the global markets. To date, 12 Tour operator companies have so far achieved the Travelife Partner Status. Since this certification is a first of its kind in Kenya and East Africa, these companies are therefore pioneers in promoting sustainability in tour operator businesses.

Our first Eco-byte this year recognizes the following companies which made it to Travelife Partner Status in 2017/18. This award is recognition for the long-term efforts and frontrunner position regarding sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility. EK congratulates the following companies on this achievement!

1. Designer Tours and Travel
2. Kisima Tours and Travel
3. Twiga Tours
4. Into Africa Tours
5. African Quest Safaris
These five companies have complied with over 100 criteria, relating to an operator’s office management, product range, international business partners and customer information.

Mr. Naut Kusters, manager of Travelife for tour operators stated, “I am delighted to see that sustainability in the tour operators sector is obtaining momentum. The award of the first few tourism companies in Kenya sets an example for African tourism sector. It will inspire other companies to follow the same path.”

Travelife is a certification system, dedicated to achieving sustainable practices within the tourism industry. It provides companies with realistic sustainability goals, tools and solutions to implement positive change within their businesses and supply chains.

The system provides online training and practical tools for sustainability management and certification. The training and online tools are suitable for tour operators and travel agencies of any size and cover all management aspects of tour company business including office operations, the supply chain, destinations and consumers.

Ecotourism Kenya and Travelife have been offering support through the Travelife online sustainability system which includes the use and implementation of the knowledge, methods and tools that have been acquired in the training and personal (in-house) coaching. Office visits to the participating companies are also scheduled as part of the support and auditing process by EK.

Upon submitting a report in compliance with the Travelife standard, the company thereafter obtains the “Travelife Partner” status.

For further information on how you can attain the Travelife Partner status in Kenya, contact the Ecotourism Kenya secretariat at (ecoratingpa@ecotourismkenya.org / ecorating@ecotourismkenya.org).