Record high interest in international sustainability conference on tourism in Sweden

Now the eyes of the world are directed once again towards Sweden's sustainable development. Over 200 persons from 35 countries have registered in for the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's (GSTC) global conference on sustainable tourism, arranged in Stockholm April 23-26.

According to the organizer, there has been a record number in a record short time, which testifies to an extra-large interest in GSTC and Sweden's sustainable development work in tourism.

Sweden's tourism industry is at the absolute forefront of sustainability development and has been widely praised internationally for this over the years. The Swedish tourism industry has already undergone and is undergoing a far-reaching green transition, which is of global interest.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) is an annual and global sustainability conference for the tourism industry with focus on how companies, destinations or regions can apply sustainability practices to their operations.

During the conference, the 400 participants will have an extensive range of panel discussions to choose from on how businesses can adapt to act climate- and environmentally smart, good examples of destinations engaging visitors, residents, and businesses in the local community and what is required to develop long-term sustainability.

This time, GSTC's Global Conference is being arranged at the Royal Djurgården in Stockholm, where Visit Sweden and the Agency for Growth stand as hosts in collaboration with the Royal Djurgården's Intressenter, who have long worked according to GSTC's Criteria, the global standards for sustainable tourism and travel.

The distinguished speakers include Sweden's former Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt, who currently serves as the Chairman of the Board for Visita, the Swedish hospitality industry's employer organization. The program also features esteemed speakers from a variety of countries including Sweden, Spain, Thailand, Finland, and Fiji. Zanzibar's Principal Secretary from the Ministry of Tourism and Heritage will also be speaking.
Find the full list of speakers, the entire program and register for the GSTC2024 Conference.

Sweden at the forefront of sustainable tourism

Internationally speaking, Sweden's sustainable stance is also of interest in tourism and travel. Sweden has been internationally praised and received plenty of attention over the years.

- For more than a decade, Sweden has been among the top ten in the global Environmental Performance Index from Columbia University and Yale University for its exceptionally clean air and clean water and low emissions.
- Sweden is a country that is associated with accessible nature experiences and is ranked as the most sustainable destination in the world, two years in a row according to the international research company Euromonitor International's Sustainability Travel Index.
- Northern Sweden has become an arena for sustainable development and the spirit of the future with new, innovative companies and sustainability initiatives. Here, the tourism industry plays a significant role in site development in order to create long-term favorable conditions for a growing and attractive society. Not only for visitors, but also to attract new labor and knowledge to the region.
- Already in 2002, Swedish Nature's Best was launched, which became one of the first quality labels for ecotourism in the world. Nature's Best gained GSTC-Recongized Status for their standard last year.
- Gothenburg has been named the world's most sustainable destination for the seventh year in a row by the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDSI).
- Stockholm is an international forerunner for global environmental and climate initiatives. Stockholm has been named the world's most sustainable city in 2022 according to the economics and sustainability magazine Corporate Knights and is one of Europe's climate-smartest cities according to a study by The Economist Intelligence Unit.

- As an important part of Stockholm, the Royal Djurgården welcomes over 15 million visitors every year. Djurgården works broadly for long-term sustainability development and in September of this year, Royal Djurgården was awarded GSTC's Green Destination Platinum Award for its structured work with sustainability, as one of two major city destinations in the world.
- The world's first and second fully environmentally certified airlines were Swedish: Malmö Aviation, which today is Braathens Regional Airlines (BRA) and the Swedish charter airline TUIfly Nordic.
- During the early 2000s, the Swedish organization ECPAT and Swedish tour operators were international pioneers in countering the sexual exploitation of children and child sex tourism, where Swedish travel companies, including TUI (then called Fritidsresor) were the first in the world to introduce a concrete, international code of conduct for hotels with action plans and training of all employees.
- The world's first airline that offered all its air travelers biofuel as an option to reduce emissions was Swedish: Braathens Regional Airlines (BRA).
- Train travel in Sweden is only made with electricity from renewable sources.
- In Sweden, development for the production of commercial electric aircraft, Heart Aerospace, was founded in 2018.
- The Swedish government has set ambitious goals for sustainability, including going fossil-free by 2045 and 100 percent renewable energy. As the first airport group in the world, state-owned Swedavia Airports, reached 0 percent fossil carbon emissions in their own operations already in 2020.

Welcome to Sweden, a destination of a different nature.

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