

NEWS

Travel Excellence wins award for pioneering gender equality

Human Rights (/areas-of-action/human-rights)

Social Responsibility (/areas-of-action/social-responsibility)

March 9, 2023



Travel Excellence, a Costa Rican travel operator, wins the first Gender Equality Champion of the Year Award for the hospitality and tourism sector, on the 8th March at ITB Berlin.

This year at ITB Berlin, the non-profit organisation Equality in Tourism (EiT) announced the winner of their first award, the Gender Equality Champion of the Year, sponsored by the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance. The ceremony on the 8th March celebrated two highly commended runner ups – AdventureWomen (<https://www.adventurewomen.com/>) from the United States, and ETUR (<https://etur.travel/>) from Ecuador. But it was Costa Rican travel operator Travel Excellence (<https://www.travelexcellence.com/>) that took home the winning trophy after the award received over 40 applications from organisations across the globe.

Mareike Wielens from Travel Excellence collected the award from Dr. Stroma Cole and award sponsor Sustainable Hospitality Alliance's (https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/?gclid=CjwKCAiAu5agBhBzEiwAdiR5tIDwn6jWNOcwBJwJDfiWkJdmvivi3DfJeeWfWq7DCgfnGrOCdwGj0BxoC5boQAvD_BwE) Chair, Wolfgang M Neumann.

The judging panel for the award were impressed at Travel Excellence's commitment to gender equality. 60% of employees are women, with 58% of management titles also held by women. This comes as a stark difference to the sector's overall representation of women in senior positions. A recent review (<https://www.travelpulse.com/news/features/leisure-industry-continues-to-struggle-with-huge-gender-imbalance.html>) of publicly listed companies in the leisure industry found that 42% in mid-level management and 33% in senior management were women.

(/)

The organisation publicly recognised that unconscious bias meant they could not make an objective evaluation of the gender inequality within their business. They began to rigorously review their policies and built a plan and legislation that came from the ground up through discussion groups to close gender gaps.

[About us](#) [Our work](#) [Tools & Resources](#) [Get involved](#) [Resource Directory](#) [News](#)

They also formed a Sexual and Work Harassment Committee, and provided training centred around topics such as work/life balance and co-responsibility at home. Travel Excellence ensured masculinity workshops were held that re-visited ways to deal with conflict and how to be a protagonist in the creation of a gender equal society.

Travel Excellence spoke about their work on the panel during the latter part of the award ceremony, stating that they learnt a lot about their company in the process of applying. Wielens felt that the criteria and questions in the application form encouraged them to review existing working practices, and improve the working environment. For future applicants, Wielens advised that future organisations need to “be motivated, feel it, and you’ll have the results”.

The panel was hosted by Dr. Stroma Cole, Director of Equality in Tourism, and joining Travel Excellence were guests Glenn Mandziuk, CEO of the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, Maud Masiyiwa, Associate of Equality in Tourism, and Domenica Barahona, General Manager of runner up ETUR. The discussion focused on the importance of the award, what more can be done to encourage award participation and what the sector can do to embrace gender equality as a whole.

In 2021, EiT won the ToDo Award for Human Rights in Tourism at ITB. This initiated the idea of creating a new award, aimed at promoting gender equality in tourism by rewarding leaders in the field, in celebrating their excellence and identifying best practices to drive improvement.

The concept of the award derived from the 2018 publication Gender Equality and Tourism: Beyond Empowerment. The book focused on women’s involvement in tourism, highlighting common experiences and the possibilities for meaningful change. The stories from the women interviewed highlighted that tourism can improve gender equality, but that empowerment comes from a collective responsibility and shared vision. The award therefore shines a light on organisations that are leading the way and inspiring others to follow.

Equality in Tourism (EiT) is a non-profit organisation working to promote gender equality in tourist destinations around the world. The organisation works across different sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry, bringing together people with a shared vision to tackle inequality. The team promotes information-sharing, networking and research, as well as the development of pilot projects that can be replicated or adapted across the tourism industry.

With sponsorship from the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance and ITB, the award will continue to celebrate innovative businesses for their gender equality work for the years to come.

Glenn Mandziuk, CEO of the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, comments:

“It’s an honour to sponsor such a prestigious award for Equality in Tourism. Celebrating organisations who are addressing the need for gender equality within the sector, is a priority and this year’s winner is very much deserved. The award aligns with our Pathway to Net Positive Hospitality, addressing fairness in the industry when it comes to people. I’m certain that as the awards mature, we’ll be acknowledging more winners, like Travel Excellence who we’re awarding today.”

Share This



(<https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Travel%20Excellence%20wins%20award%20for%20pioneering%20gender%20equality&url=https%3A%2F%2Fsustainablehospitality-award-winner-announced-itb%2F>)



Planet
Conscious
Amenities
Pack sets
new standard
for
sustainability
and
regeneration

Through this innovative project, the Alliance and Beyond Bamboo are redefining hospitality, with carbon-positive, socially impactful solutions.



World
Sustainable
Travel &
Hospitality
Awards
reveals
nominees
and opens
voting for
2025
programme

Discover the inspiring nominees for the 2025 World Sustainable Travel & Hospitality Awards and cast your vote for leaders driving Net Positive tourism.



Climate change
disproportionately
affects ethnic
minorities and
working-class
people, so why
don't they have a
seat at the table?

Young leader, Tia Chauhan explores why diversity is essential in the fight against climate change - and how the hospitality industry can lead the way.

Back To Top

Registered office

Barnards Inn, 86 Fetter Ln,
London EC4A 1AD

Useful links

Press centre
(<https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/press-centre/>)

Contact us
(<https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/get-involved/contact-us/>)

Careers
(<https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/get-involved/careers/>)


Member area
(<https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/member-area/>)


Governance and policies

Our governance
(<https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/about-us/governance/>)

Privacy and cookies
(<https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/privacy-notice/>)

Connect with us

 LinkedIn
(<https://www.linkedin.com/company/sustainablehospitality-alliance/>)

 Twitter
(<https://twitter.com/SustHosAlliance>)