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The Azores - the world's first certified archipelago

In a significant milestone, the Azores is world's first certified archipelago to be certified under the EarthCheck Sustainable Destination program. The certification was awarded during the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Conference on Terceira Island.

The Azores, an autonomous region of Portugal, is renowned for its unique archipelago of islands characterised by dramatic landscapes, stunning coast lines and charming villages. The Azores Government, in partnership with the community and the tourism industry, has made a commitment to preserve its rich culture and marine ecosystems and be recognised globally as a sustainable destination for holidays, business and lifestyle.



This commitment to sustainability and destination management is especially significant at a time when many destinations in Europe have recognised the need to manage overtourism.

The Azores Regional Secretary for Energy, Environment and Tourism, Marta Guerreiro, said “The government is very proud of achieving EarthCheck Sustainable Destinations certification and being able to share this achievement at the GSTC conference.”

The GSTC 2019 Global Conference theme is “Navigating the Way Forward in Sustainable Tourism”. Interactive workshops and panel discussions will focus on Sustainable Destination Management; Market Opportunities and Challenges for Sustainable Products; and Tourism’s Response to Climate Change.



The EarthCheck Sustainable Destinations Program provides a scientific framework to measure and monitor environmental and social impact, and to track destination performance against both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the GSTC Destination criteria and EarthCheck’s own Destination Standard, which is currently being used across four continents and eight countries

In presenting the certification the CEO and Founder of EarthCheck congratulated the Azorean Destination Authority team members for their dedication and leadership in the planning and management of sustainable outcomes.

“The team have engaged with local communities, made a commitment to measure and manage impacts and implemented initiatives that will help to protect for the long term the very things that makes the Azores special,” Mr Moore said.

Key initiatives include harvesting of rainwater and using renewable energy such as geothermal, solar, wind and hydroelectric to help minimise energy consumption across the region – the goal is to reach 80% share of renewables by 2030

CEO of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, Randy Durband, said the conference will promote sustainable tourism and destination management.

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“With delegates attending from across the globe, we aim to offer a platform for leaders and businesses to collaborate, network and discuss smart and sustainable destination management and tourism responding to climate change,” Mr Durband said.



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