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New European Destination of Excellence 2022 competition launched

Brussels (ots) -

EU revamps the EDEN competition to award tourism sustainability pioneers

Today, the European Commission launches the European Destination of Excellence (EDEN) 2022 competition. This initiative rewards the best achievements in sustainable tourism and green transition practices in smaller destinations across Europe.

EDEN was first introduced by the European Commission in 2007 as an initiative to reward non-traditional, emerging sustainable tourism destinations in Europe based on national competitions. The initiative has been redesigned and updated in view of the European Green Deal goals and it will contribute to the recovery and resilience of tourism destinations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It covers EU countries as well non-EU countries participating in the COSME programme [1]. The competition addresses smaller tourism destinations which can showcase their outstanding achievements in sustainability and inspire other tourism destinations in their green transition.

The European Destinations of Excellence is an EU initiative, implemented by the European Commission. Its aim is to recognise and award smaller destinations that have in place successful strategies to boost sustainable tourism through green transition practices. The competition is founded upon the principle of promoting the development of sustainable tourism in destinations which brings value to the economy, the planet and the people.

In order to compete for the 2022 European Destination of Excellence title, destinations are asked to demonstrate their best practices in sustainable tourism and green transition. Applications will first be evaluated by a panel of independent sustainability experts. In the second step, 3 shortlisted cities will be asked to present their city's candidature in front of the European Jury. The European Jury will select one winner, the European Destination of Excellence 2022, which will be announced in November 2021.

The winning destination will be positioned as a tourism sustainability pioneer committed to the European Green Deal objectives and will receive expert communication and branding support at the EU level throughout 2022.

To apply, destination representatives are asked to complete an [online form](#). **The deadline for applications is 16 June 2021 at 17:00 CET.**

For all the latest news visit the [European Destinations of Excellence website](#).

Notes to Editors

1. Since 2007, the European Commission supported EU Member States and other countries participating in the COSME programme to reward non-traditional, emerging sustainable tourism destinations in Europe through the 'European Destination of Excellence' (EDEN) award. This action aimed to foster sustainable tourism destination management models across Europe by selecting and promoting EDEN destinations. To date, 175 destinations from 27 different countries have received the award under different annual themes.

2. In 2019 the "Study on EDEN evaluation" was carried out to assess the continued relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the EDEN initiative and the various actions implemented in its framework, as well as its coherence with other EU initiatives. Following the results and recommendations of the evaluation study, the European Commission relaunched the initiative which is renewed, taking into account European Green Deal goals. In addition to the EU countries, it also covers non-EU countries participating in the COSME programme. The competition addresses smaller tourism destinations which can showcase their outstanding achievements in sustainability and inspire other tourism destinations in their green transition.

3. The EDEN Award was implemented first as a pilot project and as a preparatory action initiated by the European Parliament and since 2011 has continued under the CIP/COSME programmes.

4. The competition for the European Destination of Excellence 2022 opened on 22 April 2021. Details on how to apply and terms and conditions can be found at <https://ec.europa.eu/eden>. The deadline for applications is 16 June 2021 at 17:00 CET.

5. The competition is open to cities and towns in the EU Member States and non-EU countries participating in the COSME programme, with a population between 25,000 - 100,000. For small states with total population below 1 million, destinations with above 5,000 inhabitants are eligible to apply. Please refer to the Guide for Applicants for more information.

6. Eligible applications will be evaluated against a set of established assessment criteria, by a panel of independent sustainability experts. The European Commission, based on the evaluation by experts, will shortlist 3 cities, which will be invited to present their candidatures in front of a European Jury. The European Jury will select one European Destination of Excellence 2022.

7. Destinations shortlisted as finalists will be announced in September 2021 and the winner will be revealed in November 2021.

[1] Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom. <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/39579>

Contact:

European Destinations of Excellence Secretariat: Antigoni Avgeropoulou, info@edensecretariat.eu, +49 (0) 30 70 01 86 390

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