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TO DO! 2016: Award Ceremony for the Winners at ITB

The winning projects stand for socially responsible tourism, exemplary ideas for developing countries, economies in transition and industrialised countries

Seefeld, 10/03/2016 – During this year's ITB, on 10th March in Berlin, the two winners of the TO DO! Contest Socially Responsible Tourism were presented with their awards. The renowned prizes went to "**Kabani – The Other Direction"**, India, and "**Pueblos Mancomunados",** Mexico. Representatives of the projects received their sculptures and certificates at the award ceremony at Palais am Funkturm.

The tourism projects awarded with the TO DO! 2016 pursue similar objectives: to improve local people's living conditions by carefully developing tourism services in a planned manner, to create additional sources of income and strengthen self-awareness of local culture and traditions. The most important criterion for the award is the participation of the local population in the planning and implementation of tourism projects. This establishes a special connection between participation, social responsibility and sustainability.

Petra Thomas, CEO of "forum anders reisen" in her laudatory speech in honour of the award winners: *"Two outstanding examples of tourism concepts designed by local communities in harmony with people and the environment, showing the positive force of sustainable tourism development (…). For the different dimensions of sustainability may only be taken together. Environment, traditions, cultural goods, social community, food, resource use – all these aspects are about the space where people (and animals) live, and thus about the living conditions of the people themselves".*

"Kabani – The Other Direction" and "Kabani Community Tourism & Services Ltd."

"Kabani" is a non-governmental organization and social enterprise based in Kozhikode (Calicut). "Kabani" raises awareness of the negative impacts of tourism und promotes sustainable, participatory village development as an alternative model. In 2005, "Kabani" started their first tourism project with farmers in Wayanad and now work with communities in several parts of South India. The guests are put up in home-stays with local families and get insights

into the lives of the villagers. The hosts earn an additional income by taking care of the guests on a rotational basis. This income may help them cope with losses in agriculture and support a shift to organic farming. Other parts of the tourism income are used for village development, training programmes, building and strengthening democratic structures of decision-making and monitoring, entrepreneurship development, advocacy and campaigns.

The award was received by Sumesh Mangalasseri, founder and CEO of Kabani: *"Winning an award means a lot to us. It brings a feeling of recognition, honour, fame, happiness, pride, and so on. But at the same time, it also brings a kind of fear because the award is a sweet responsibility which people have put on us. We hope we will get further support, solidarity and togetherness from you all in our journey towards an 'other direction' in tourism.*

Pueblos Mancomunados

The Pueblos Mancomunados – in the state of Oaxaca – are an association of eight indigenous and self-governed Zapotec villages that have been promoting a local kind of tourism in the Sierra Norte, designed by themselves. The programmes offered include guided hiking and biking tours that may take one day or several days. They also focus on introducing the guests to the Zapotec culture, the diverse flora and fauna of the surrounding forests, and the regional cuisine.

The Pueblos Mancomunados manage their surrounding forests sustainably and attach great importance to protecting their environment. Tourism is meant to generate income in the villages. Every member of the village community must contribute their part on a volunteer basis. All tourism services – such as accommodation, food, and excursions – are organised by the villagers. The entire tourism planning lies in the hands of the community of villages. The Pueblos Mancomunados are considered a model in Mexico – with regard to both their eco-tourism programmes and their local self-government.

Angelina Martinez Pérez, CEO of the project, in her project presentation: "*Throughout this history, we have learned two important lessons: 1) it is not wise to place in the hands of others the development and own welfare and 2) mastering new situations, such as starting and maintaining a tourism business, is only achieved when the people appropriate the situation, the only way you learn and from this it is possible to develop a coherent strategic thinking with the goals emanating from our cultural identity.*"

SST – long-time supporter of the TO DO!

On behalf of the Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism (SST), supporting member and sponsor of the prize money for the TO DO! contest, board president Hansjörg Ruf handed over the prize money of 5,000 Swiss Francs each to the winners The prize money is meant to help develop the projects further.

Both of the TO DO! winners provide successful examples of sustainable achievements of socially responsible concepts, especially through the intensive involvement of the local population in the development of tourism. Therefore, they may serve as examples of best practice for other tourism destinations.

During the award ceremony, Claudia Mitteneder, managing director of the Institute for Tourism and Development, pointed out that socially responsible tourism continues to remain a challenge: *"From our perspective, tourism is sustainable if it is socially responsible. Considering the ecological aspects of travel is a necessary precondition, so that encounters in a tourism context may eventually lead to reducing stereotypes and to fostering mutual respect and acting in partnership. The TO DO! wants to provide a stage for such approaches – encourage projects to exchange ideas and inspire tourists to try a different way of travelling".*

Apart from the prize money sponsored by SST, the winners received TO DO! sculptures which were this year produced in cooperation with the vocational school for wood carving in Munich. They were made by Teresa Friedrich, a young artist aged 22.

Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung (Institute for Tourism and Development) focuses on development related information and education in tourism. In this context, it brings out publications, organises international contests, offers training and seminars for people employed in the tourism sector, carries out tourism research and consultancy and is involved in dialogue on issues related to tourism development.

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