

Global Sustainable Tourism Council and Aquila Center for Cruise Excellence Announce Partnership

CANADA, September 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and the Aquila Center for Cruise Excellence has announced a partnership to promote the development and delivery of sustainable, high-quality tourism experiences across the cruise tourism sector through professional training — with a focus on tour operators and tour guides in cruise destinations.

As part of the collaboration, both organizations will promote each other's training programs at preferred rates, with the goal of making high-quality, practical training more accessible to tour operators and guides, helping them enhance the guest experience and drive destination growth.

This collaboration builds on a shared commitment to responsible tourism and began in 2024 with Aquila's development of the Excellence in Sustainable Destination Experiences program, aligned with the GSTC Framework. Created by cruise operators for cruise operators, the training offers practical, real-world tools for improving the quality and sustainability of shore experiences addressing a gap often faced by industry stakeholders on the ground.

"We're excited to work with GSTC to bring global sustainability principles into practical application for shore excursions operators," said Beth Hatt, Founder at Aquila. "Our team knows these challenges well — we're not just trainers, we're operators too. That's why this partnership feels so natural."

"Our partnership with Aquila connects GSTC Standards with the practical realities of cruise



Beth Hatt, Founder of Aquila Center for Cruise Excellence, with Randy Durband, CEO, Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), at Seatrade Cruise Global 2025.

tourism. Together, we can equip operators and guides with the tools to empower cruise tourism professionals with the knowledge, tools and confidence to deliver sustainable experiences that benefit destinations, communities and guests,” said Randy Durband, CEO of GSTC.

The two organizations will collaborate on participant feedback and shared communications, and are exploring co-branded training journeys to support continuous improvement across the tourism value chain.



Melanie Colpits, Partner at Aquila, during a recent training in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

For more information on Aquila’s training programs, visit www.cruiseexcellence.com.

About Aquila Center for Cruise Excellence

Aquila is the leading destination training provider for the global cruise industry. They offer training strategies for international destinations, tour companies, tour guides, and front-line operators. With over 35 years’ experience in the cruise industry, Aquila is committed to cruise destination success through values-driven partnership with cruise lines and destinations.

For more information on Aquila Center for Cruise Excellence and its training programs, visit cruiseexcellence.com.

About The Global Sustainable Tourism Council

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC®) manages the GSTC Standards, the global standards for sustainable travel and tourism; as well as acts as an international body providing assurance for sustainable tourism certification in three key subsectors of tourism: hotels/accommodations, tour operators/agencies and destinations.

□ Information for media and the press: www.gstc.org/about/for-the-press/

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