

Preserving fragile island marine ecosystems through coral reef restoration: TUI Care Foundation launches TUI Sea the Change programme in Aruba and coral adoption programme in Bali

- *TUI Sea the Change Aruba partners with ScubbleBubbles Foundation to restore 6000 m² coral reefs and raise awareness about marine conservation to 35,000 tourists and local communities*
- *TUI Sea the Change Bali increases the size of its 2000 m²-large coral restoration site through a newly established coral adoption programme*
- *Programmes are launched as part of TUI Care Foundation's Marine May, which emphasises the importance of marine conservation*

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Berlin, 28th May 2024. *Aruba is a popular tourist destination known for its stunning white-sand beaches, beautiful coral reefs and vibrant marine life, attracting over a million visitors annually. The health of its marine environment is crucial for both the natural ecosystem and the island's economy and thriving tourism sector. However, Aruba's reefs are undergoing significant degradation, threatening marine biodiversity and affecting reef-associated tourism. Locals and visitors often lack knowledge about corals and, whilst they are eager to learn, opportunities for education are scarce. TUI Sea the Change Aruba focuses on preserving this vulnerable ecosystem by conserving corals and educating both the Aruban community and tourists about ocean conservation.*

In the Caribbean alone, reef-associated tourism generates over \$7.9 billion annually from more than 11 million visitors. Coral reefs not only provide a crucial source of income for local communities but also provide an important ecosystem for life underwater and protect coastal areas from storms and erosion. However, like many reefs around the world, Aruba's coral reefs are deteriorating at an alarming rate and are at risk of extinction. TUI Sea the Change Aruba seeks to protect and restore a total of 6,000 m² seascapes around the island by using advanced techniques in coral propagation and fragmentation. It establishes a coral reef restoration facility on De Palm Island that will enable the increase of coral species variety and the improvement of restoration methods.

This facility will be the first of its kind in Aruba, making reef restoration more accessible to the local community, hospitality workers and eventually, tourists visiting the island. Daily facility tours, educational workshops and events like science nights will engage 35,000 tourists and 10,000 school children to raise awareness about the importance of coral reefs and foster a deeper understanding of marine conservation.

Hands-on activities, like helping with restoration work by cutting fragments and placing them on pucks, will empower visitors to play an active role in protecting the ocean environment.

Organised tours will also offer guests the opportunity to visit the in-water nursery, outplant corals onto the reef and participate in guided snorkels and dives to explore the

underwater world. Additionally, the project involves and educates local authorities and tour operators by organising information sessions and hands-on workshops.

TUI Sea the Change Aruba follows the model of TUI Sea the Change Bali, another programme focusing on coral restoration and education around marine conservation. In partnership with Livingseas Foundation, around 3,600 holidaymakers can visit the programme's floating pontoon from where snorkelling and diving tours to the conservation reef site depart. The pontoon also serves as a venue for educational sessions and workshops where visitors can contribute to the site by building their own reef stars, a structure which holds and supports the growth of coral segments. To date, almost 2,000 square meters of reef stars have been installed in the seabed along Padangbai, which have contributed to the growth of a thriving marine ecosystem.

To further fund and grow the restoration site, a new coral adoption programme has been set up by the TUI Care Foundation. Donors from all around the world can donate with just a few clicks through the organisation's website and a personalised reef star will be installed on the site on their behalf. A biodegradable bamboo tag is then attached to the reef start with a name or a message chosen by the donor.

The TUI Care Foundation's 'Marine May' is a month of activities dedicated to ocean preservation. Through a series of project launches and educational activities, it emphasises the importance of sustainable practices to safeguard marine ecosystems for local communities and generations to come.

About the TUI Care Foundation

Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates projects which create new opportunities and contribute to thriving communities in tourism destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, it supports education and training opportunities for young people; drives the protection of natural habitats and the marine environment; and helps local communities to thrive sustainably and benefit from tourism. The TUI Care Foundation builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long-lasting impact. The independent charitable organisation was founded by TUI, one of the world's leading tourism businesses, and is based in the Netherlands. Website: www.tuicarefoundation.com | [Adopt a coral](#)

About ScubbleBubbles

ScubbleBubbles Foundation aims to empower, educate and engage more local youth on Aruba in ocean conservation, which it strives to achieve through five main activities, as well as scuba diving instruction. Its main activities include organising educational sessions about corals to children at schools and camps, offering PADI certification at a reduced cost to local youth who volunteer with the foundation, conducting monthly beach cleanups, engaging in coral restoration activities, and conducting regular reef cleanups. Website: www.scubblebubbles.org

About Livingseas Foundation

Livingseas Foundation aims to address the pressing needs of the ocean. From coral reef restoration to limiting ocean waste, the Foundation works with local communities to create impact projects that restore marine biodiversity to its former glory. It focusses on three main areas: direct impact through coral reef restoration projects, proper waste management in coastal towns, and the training and education of local youth in the sustainable management of these projects for the long term.

Website: www.livingseasfoundation.org/

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