

Expanding circular economy solutions for plastic waste in the Caribbean: TUI Care Foundation launches new phase of Destination Zero Waste programme in Curaçao

- *Destination Zero Waste Curaçao expands island-wide plastic collection and recycling efforts in partnership with the tourism sector*
- *Project's first phase put in place systems through which more than 50 tonnes of waste have been collected from tourism businesses*
- *Second two-year phase expands to include participation of almost 100 tourism businesses*

Berlin, 2 July 2026. *Plastic pollution is one of the most pressing environmental challenges facing Small Island Developing States (SIDS). In Curaçao, where less than 10% of plastic waste is recycled and landfill capacity is rapidly decreasing, plastic leakage threatens biodiversity, damages coral reefs and beaches, affects public health and undermines livelihoods linked to tourism and healthy coastal ecosystems. As tourism continues to grow across the Caribbean, finding sustainable waste management solutions has become increasingly urgent for island communities.*

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To address this challenge, the TUI Care Foundation and local organisation Green Phenix are launching the next phase of Destination Zero Waste Curaçao. The initiative strengthens Curaçao's circular economy by expanding plastic collection, recycling and upcycling activities in close collaboration with the tourism sector. During the first project phase, more than 50 tonnes of waste was collected through partnerships established with over 40 businesses across Curaçao. Revenue generated through the production of upcycled products contributed to covering operational costs whilst creating inclusive jobs for women, young people and individuals with limited access to the labour market.

The second phase significantly expands the initiative by increasing participation to almost 100 tourism and hospitality businesses across Curaçao, with the aim of managing 25 tonnes of plastic waste and 30 tonnes of other waste materials through collection, sorting, recycling, and upcycling. All plastic will be sorted at a designated facility – with different types of materials then following different pathways. Some are recycled or upcycled by Green Phenix, some are processed by partners, some are returned into international recycling value chains, and some are used for testing potential local applications, including in building materials.

In addition to scaling up operations in Curaçao, the project also introduces a regional knowledge-sharing component across all six Dutch Caribbean islands. The Curaçao model, which demonstrates how tourism-sector engagement, coordinated waste collection and local value creation can reduce plastic pollution, will now be shared through a regional exchange focused on practical circular economy solutions for island destinations.

This project is part of the global Destination Zero Waste Programme, which inspires new ways to reduce and reuse waste in tourism destinations that create jobs and promote a circular economy. The Programme is implemented in destinations around the world, including Zanzibar, Mauritius, Cyprus, Greece, Menorca, Sicily and Mexico.

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.

About Green Phenix

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Green Phenix is a social enterprise that aims to create a circular inclusive economy in the Caribbean. Plastic waste is collected and with innovative technology transformed into new, long-lasting & meaningful products.

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