



Press release

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Coral reef protection to grow with the Green Fins Hub

The new Green Fins Hub offers enhanced and global membership for participating dive and snorkel operators to conserve the marine environment

13 September, Bristol, UK – Sustainable marine tourism is receiving a major boost with the launch of the Green Fins Hub, a global digital platform for diving and snorkelling operators worldwide. The industry-backed digital platform is expected to scale up reach from about 700 operators across 14 countries today to a potential 30,000 worldwide, thus increasing coral protection and conservation worldwide.

The Green Fins Hub is the first-ever global marine tourism industry platform, helping operators to make simple, cost-efficient changes to their daily practices by utilising tried and tested solutions, keep track of their annual improvements and communicate with their communities and customers. The tool has been developed by The Reef-World Foundation in partnership with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to overcome the biggest sustainability challenges in the marine conservation tourism industry.

“Coral reefs, home to at least 25 per cent of marine life, are the mecca for marine-related tourism, contributing up to 40 per cent or more of the gross domestic product in some island nations. However, they are a most vulnerable ecosystem, especially to climate change with the difference between a global temperature rise of 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius being existential for reefs,” said Leticia Carvalho, Principal Coordinator, Marine and Freshwater at UNEP. “Increasing accessibility of best practice, knowledge and citizen science through this global digital hub can be a game changer in ensuring a future for coral reefs and other fragile marine ecosystems.”

The Green Fins Hub is the latest development by the Reef-World Foundation to meet a growing industry demand for environmentally-friendly underwater sports. The foundation recently [surveyed](#) over 2,400 dive tourists and professionals, of whom 83 per cent said they are looking for further sustainability education on their holiday, 75 per cent said they would pay more for it, but 85 per cent said that they find it difficult to see if an operator is sustainable.

The Green Fins Hub is intended to catalyse a seismic shift towards sustainability in the marine tourism sector, by hosting two types of Green Fins membership:

- [Digital membership](#) that will be available to dive, snorkel and liveaboard operations globally. Throughout every year of membership, operators will receive environmental scores based on a detailed online self-evaluation and progress made on their action plans.
- [Green Fins Certified Members](#) will continue to be assessed annually and trained in person at their operation. The assessment process will continue to be based on set criteria using a scoring system (0-330 point system, with a low score implying low impact of a business on coral reefs).

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As part of the Green Fins Hub, there will now be a **minimum threshold** (>200 of a maximum environmental impact score) for becoming a Green Fins Certified Member and a **ranking of bronze, silver or gold certified members** according to performance.

Additional features on the Hub include:

- The **Green Fins Community Forum** for operators around the world to raise industry needs, discuss environmental issues and share lessons and ideas with like-minded industry leaders, NGOs and governments. For example, dive centres experiencing outbreaks of invasive species like the Crown-of-Thorns Seastar (COTS) at their dive sites can use the forum to gain the resources and expertise to take immediate conservation action.
- The **Green Fins Solutions Library** gives access to over 100 proven environmental solutions to common daily operational challenges, tried and tested by the Green Fins network for over two decades.
- The **Action Plan Tracker**: Members will receive an annual sustainability action plan with set goals. An advanced user interface now allows them to track their progress over time.

The Green Fins Hub has been co-created with key industry partners from around the world, to ensure it meets the needs of our stakeholders. Diver training agency, PADI, and its network have pioneered and financially backed this project from its inception. In addition, industry leaders including training agencies PSS, RAID, diver insurance company DAN, dive holiday booking platforms such as ZuBlu and PADI Travel, and a series of Green Fins Members from around the world have helped shape the platform throughout development.

Katie Thompson Global Director of Corporate Social Responsibility at PADI said, "As the world's leading initiative dedicated to environmental guidelines that promote a sustainable diving and snorkelling industry, we knew that to reduce the global environmental footprint of scuba diving, we had to work closely with Reef-World's Green Fins initiative. Since the beginning of our partnership in 2018, it's been a major priority for us to make sure that all 6,600+ PADI Members across the globe have access to the low-cost and practical support that Green Fins membership provides. That's why we have worked together to conceptualise and refine Green Fins Hub; now every one of our amazing PADI Members can join a community committed to positive change, and work towards a more sustainable future one step at a time."

The development of the Green Fins Hub has been supported by numerous partners, another indication of the need for such a sustainability tool. Significant support was received from the Inter-American Development Bank through the Beyond Tourism Challenge, UNEP, the Matthew Good Foundation and Conservation X Labs.

"The Green Fins Hub is the solution the scuba diving industry needs to push sustainability efforts forward," said Adam Broadbent, founder of ZuBlu, a leading dive travel booking platform "By digitalising environmental goal tracking, centralising countless sustainability resources, and encouraging collaboration between operators, the Hub is empowering us all to create a greener future for the big blue we all love."

"We are very excited about this new development from Green Fins," says Anais Lefrere, Business Development Manager at DUNE United, an international network of Liveboards and Dive Centres. "The self-evaluation model on the Green Fins Hub will help us to identify environmental challenges within each

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of our partner operations and provide step by step support in addressing these. This will ultimately help us to mainstream environmental considerations across our whole brand and help us to demonstrate our commitment to sustainability."

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About Reef-World

The [Reef-World Foundation](#) is a registered UK charity which delivers practical solutions for marine conservation around the world. The charity promotes the wise use of natural resources - particularly coral reefs and related ecosystems - for the benefit of local communities, visitors and future generations. It is dedicated to supporting, inspiring and empowering governments, businesses, communities and individuals around the world to act in conserving and sustainably developing coastal resources.

Reef-World leads the global implementation of the UN Environment Programme's Green Fins initiative, which focuses on driving environmentally friendly scuba diving and snorkelling practices across the industry globally. As such, the charity provides low cost and practical solutions to local and industry-wide environmental challenges associated with the marine tourism industry. It provides education and capacity building assistance to empower environmental champions (within the diving industry, local communities, authorities and governments) to implement proven coastal resource management approaches.

About Green Fins

[Green Fins](#) is a proven conservation management approach – spearheaded by The Reef-World Foundation in partnership with the UN Environment Programme – which leads to a measurable reduction in the negative environmental impacts associated with the marine tourism industry. The initiative aims to protect and conserve coral reefs through environmentally friendly guidelines that promote a sustainable diving and snorkelling tourism industry. It provides the only internationally recognised environmental standards for the diving and snorkelling industry and has a robust assessment system to measure compliance.

Green Fins encourages and empowers members of the diving industry to act to reduce the pressures on coral reefs by offering dive and snorkel companies practical, low-cost alternatives to harmful practices - such as anchoring, fish feeding and chemical pollution – as well as providing strategic training, support and resources. By reducing the local direct and indirect pressures tourism puts on coral reefs, it helps make corals healthier and more resilient to other stresses such as the effects of climate change. Look for the Green Fins logo when booking your next dive trip.

Please visit www.greenfins.net to learn more or follow the initiative on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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About the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#))

[UNEP](#) is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.