



BOOKING BOOSTER 2017

IMPACT REPORT

**BUILDING
A SUSTAINABLE
FUTURE FOR
THE GLOBAL
TOURISM
INDUSTRY**



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With a mission to empower people to experience the world, at Booking.com we want to help travellers explore and enjoy more than 130,000 unique destinations in every corner of the globe. We also seek to contribute to the ongoing health of these same destinations so that future generations can continue to enjoy them for years to come.

To make a positive, lasting impression on the global travel industry, we know that meaningful change can only come about through strategic and deliberate collaboration throughout the entire ecosystem.

We believe that by investing our time, energy and passion in the right projects and backing the right people with the right ideas, we can help accelerate discovery and scale solutions to communities and destinations worldwide. We empower and support the work of sustainable tourism ventures to strengthen local communities, to preserve and promote culture, to help disperse tourism more evenly and to protect our valuable natural resources. And we do it all the Booking.com way.

Twenty years ago we were still a startup ourselves. Today, Booking.com is one of the leading e-commerce companies in the world. Guests can access Booking.com anytime and anywhere, whether it's from their desktop computer, mobile phone or tablet, and they don't pay booking fees - ever. Booking.com is available in over 40 languages, offers over 28M reported listings, including over 5M listings alone in homes, apartments,

and other unique places to stay, covering over 130,000 destinations in 228 countries and territories worldwide. While we've grown, our company continues to thrive on that same entrepreneurial energy that propelled us in the early days. And with the experience and expertise we've built up, we want to help disruptive innovators in sustainable tourism to take their ventures to the next level, enabling them to unlock emerging demand from the next generation of responsible travellers.

In 2017, we launched the Booking Booster Programme, which brought 10 top startups to Amsterdam where they worked on their growth plans, were mentored by Booking.com experts and pitched for grant funding of up to €500,000. We are very pleased to present our first impact report for the Booking Booster and invite you to read the following pages to find out what was achieved by these extraordinary sustainable tourism ventures.

Gillian Tans
Chief Executive Officer - Booking.com



About the Booking Booster

With our Booking Booster programme, we aim to turn tourism into a force for good by supporting a select group of extraordinary startups as they look to scale their businesses and impact globally.

To give the startups the tools, skills, resources and network to achieve their goals, the Booking Booster programme consists of the following elements:



Three-week accelerator in Amsterdam: two representatives per invited startup have the opportunity to learn about scaling their business, growing and measuring their positive impact, organisational growth, marketing, technology, investing, financial practices and more.



Mentorship: Booking.com experts mentor the startups in executing their scaling plan for 12 months, starting during the three-week Booster programme in Amsterdam.



Booking Volunteers: In addition to their dedicated mentor, all participating startups have access to the expertise available at Booking.com through the Booking Cares Volunteer Programme. Any projects that require specific expertise can be picked up by Booking.com employees that want to volunteer their skills.



Networking: The Booking Booster programme is an incredible opportunity to grow an impact-focused network. The participating entrepreneurs connect with each other, expert trainers and Booking.com experts.



Media exposure: The Booking Booster programme helps to increase exposure for all invited startups by sharing their stories and connecting them to media opportunities.



Grant funding: At the end of the three-week programme in Amsterdam, invited startups have the opportunity to pitch their scaling plan to our judges and ask for a grant of anywhere between €100,000 and €500,000 to execute their plan. In both 2017 and 2018, €2M in scaling grants were available from the Booking Booster programme fund.



Building a more sustainable future for sustainable tourism

At Booking we want to help build a more sustainable future for the global tourism industry. More specifically, through our Booster programme, we want to drive innovation in sustainable tourism. Ultimately to ensure that future generations can continue to experience destinations across the globe with us.

To demonstrate to what extent we are achieving this ambition, we will measure the following indicators and outcomes:

Number of startups: First, year on year we aim to support a growing number of innovative startups dedicated to sustainable tourism. We will be looking at the number of applications and invited ventures for the Booster programmes.

Business growth: Each year we'll also dive into business growth of the enterprises dedicated to sustainable tourism.

Looking specifically at:

- Revenue growth EBITDA
- Number of customers, year on year
- Full time staff growth
- New funding raised within 2 years after participation in the Booster

Skills & collaboration: Next we'll measure to what extent our programmes are supporting a growing number of startups dedicated to sustainable tourism - to scale their business and impact globally.

We will look at the following metrics:

- Improved business skills
- Peer support and collaboration among booster startups
- % Media coverage
- # of business partnerships
- Satisfaction rate mentorship

Impact growth

Finally we'll dive into the impact stories and metrics of the individual Booster startups.

698
applications

10
finalists

€2M
in grant funding

7
grantees

Moving Worlds

US // MovingWorlds exists to get expertise to the parts of the world that need it most. They help professionals volunteer their real skills - go Experteering - with social impact organisations overseas, on their own, or through corporate-sponsored programmes.

Awake

Colombia // Awake is a nature travel and experiences marketplace. They directly and efficiently connect travelers with local hosts in nature destinations and empower them to increase their livelihood opportunities while at the same time protecting biodiversity.

Backstreet Academy

Singapore // Backstreet Academy is a peer-to-peer impact travel platform that empowers impoverished local communities in developing countries that cannot speak English and don't have access to certain technology to create unique travel experiences, host tourists and showcase their tradition, culture and heritage.

Desolenator

UK // Desolenator is a clean off-grid technology that can purify any water – seawater or contaminated sources – into clean drinking water using solar power. They are currently running pilots with hotel accommodation partners in Asia.

Authenticook

India // Authenticook provides an avenue where locals (particularly women) can create awareness about their culture through food and generate income from the comfort of their own home.

Visit.org

US // Visit.org is a platform for booking social impact travel experiences. 100% of hosts' revenue is invested back into the local community.

Mejdi

US // MEJDI runs two-guide, multi-narrative tours, bringing together divergent local communities to provide travelers with different religious, political, and cultural perspectives.

Good Hotel

Guatemala // Good Hotel Group is a profit for non-profit organisation that combines doing good with doing business and premium experiences. They reinvest all profits into business and education, and as a result, stimulate local entrepreneurship and development.

Local Alike

Thailand // LocalAlike.com is an online sustainable tourism marketplace where travellers around the world can find authentic experiences that guarantee to generate income for local communities.

Seabin

AUS/Spain // The Seabin is an automated marina rubbish bin that collects floating rubbish, debris and oil 24/7. Focused on cleaning coastal areas so that locals and travellers can enjoy swimming and surfing in plastic-free waters.



Impact measurement

The impact assessment plays an on-going role in our programme - helping us to understand the benefits that we're collectively bringing to destinations, to refine the Booster programme further and maximise the effectiveness of our funding.

Over the year following the programme, the seven grant winners shared their quarterly progress and participated in quarterly calls focused on their next growth steps. In May 2018, we surveyed the seven start ups to understand the impact they're making on destinations across the globe.

For the Booking Booster programme, as well as for our other Booking Cares programmes, we will particularly focus on impact and innovation in these four areas.



Impact numbers 2016 vs 2017

Seven startups are improving destinations in 23 countries across the globe.

67%

Average increase in revenue

5%-155%

Increase in employees

+190,558

Customers



“The Booking Booster programme has given us immense visibility and Booking.com’s continued support shows its complete faith and validation in our business model, which has also led to increased confidence from our customers, old and new.”

Ameya - Authenticook

How the
grant funding
was spent:

57%

Hired new employees

57%

Technology

14%

Piloting

43%

Marketing

14%

Product
development



100%

say the Booster has impacted their business for the better

100%

say the Booster has improved their skills as social entrepreneurs

85%

say the Booster has helped increase their social impact

71%

say the Booster helped them gain a social impact focused network

71%

say participating in the Booster has resulted in valuable publicity

71%

are collaborating with each other already or plan to do so



“The Booking Booster gave us a family and a support network we can count on in our journey to make impact travel mainstream.” Akash - Backstreet Academy



Impact stories

The next part of the report shares the impact stories from the seven startups that were awarded grant funding in the first year of the Booster. From increasing the income generated by local communities in nature destinations in Columbia by 116% to striving to remove 365 tons of debris from the world's oceans, these ventures are making a measurable difference to multiple destinations around the globe. We are incredibly proud to be part of their stories.



AUTHENTICOOK

Founded in India in 2015
Operating in India
Inclusive growth | Preserve and promote local culture

Received €200,000

in Booster grant funding

“One of our biggest learnings from the Booster programme and the continued mentoring sessions has been that you don’t need to do a hundred things at the same time, just focus on a handful of things and do them well. Another learning and something that we have imbibed from Booking.com’s culture is the importance of customer feedback or testing before implementation, whether it is features on the website or tweaks in our business model. Booking.com has provided a support system in the real sense of the term.” Ameya - Co-Founder

The Business

Authenticook is an opportunity for travellers and locals alike, to experience a place one meal at a time. Authenticook provides authentic culinary experiences (ranging from a full course meal to cooking classes) at the homes of locals, thereby providing an avenue to people to experience and understand the local culture through the medium of food!

“Our aim is to provide an avenue where locals can create awareness about their culture and generate income in the comforts of their home. We at Authenticook, believe that food is a religion that

2016 vs 2017

Revenue **€16,677 to €30,619**

Employees **3 to 8**

Customers **1,365 to 5,820**

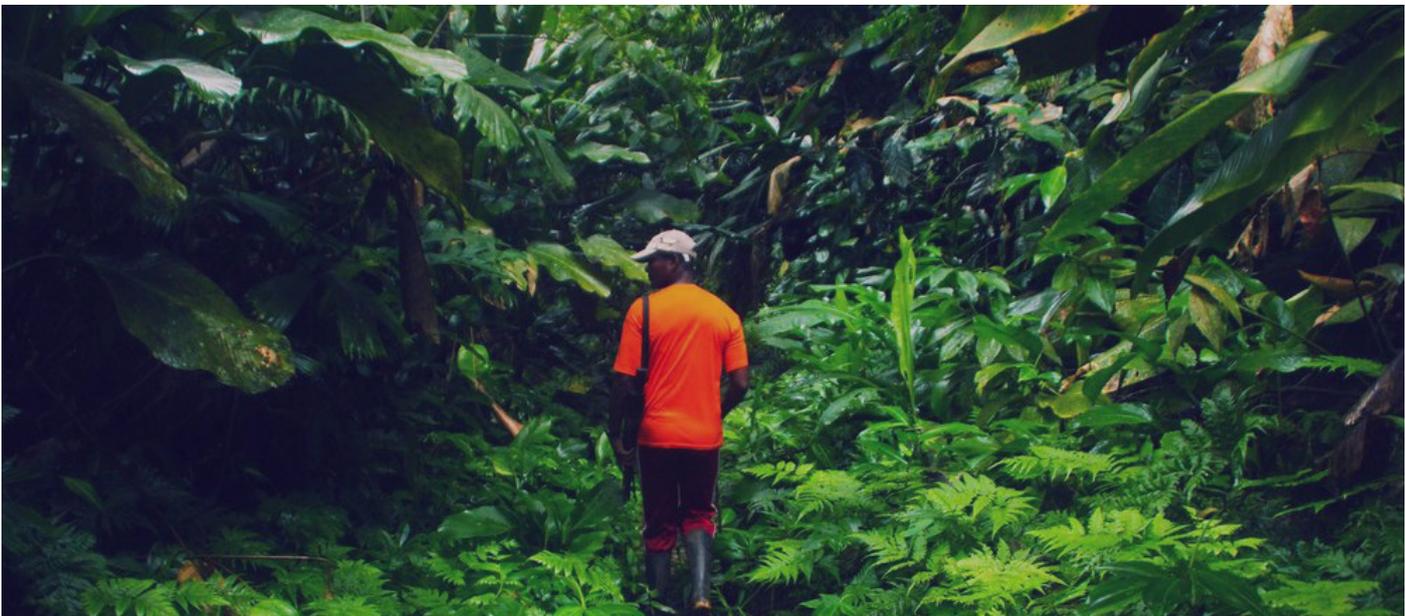
transcends boundaries, regions and prejudices. We are today living in a world where people are highly disconnected whether it relates to the cultures, traditions or just merely perceptions. Authenticook is an avenue to bring people closer through the common love of food.”
Priyanka - Co-Founder

The Impact

India has 29 different states, we have 1,652 dialects and more than 300 estimated cuisines! Authenticook is providing a way to experience this diversity.

“Our dream is to impact more than one million women, empower them by generating their own income while sharing their stories and beautiful cooking with the world.” Ameya - Co-Founder

From 2016 to 2017, Authenticook nearly doubled the number of hosts they work with from 59 to 98. While the revenue earned per host lowered from 565 euro per host in 2016 to 318 euro per host in 2017, the number of customers grew from 1365 to 5820. Which means overall income generated through food experiences has grown year on year by nearly 300%.



AWAKE

Founded in Colombia in 2014
Operating in Colombia
[Inclusive growth | Conserve
Natural Resources](#)

Received €300,000
in Booster grant funding

“The Booster empowered us with anything from funding to knowledge. The programme strengthened our impact vision and allowed us to connect, collaborate and share with amazing people.”
Miguel - Co-Founder

The Business

Awake works across two areas. On one hand, Awake is a nature travel and experiences marketplace, directly and efficiently connecting travellers with local hosts, at a low cost while guaranteeing the best offer, great support and service, easy planning, booking, access to other travellers’ reviews, all at the best possible price. At the same time, Awake is a community sustainable development agency, contributing to closing the gap between market needs and the local offer.

The Impact

“In 2008 we went on a trekking and kayaking expedition through the Magdalena River and this changed our lives forever. We discovered beautiful biodiversity and astonishing landscapes. But at the same time we faced the harsh economic conditions for locals to make it through the day and provide for their families.” Laura - Co-Founder
“We will be a leading example for ecotourism in

2016 vs 2017

Revenue **€266,836 to €358,000**
Employees **9 to 23**
Customers **430 to 1,330**

the world, where the commercialisation of experiences in nature is only possible if it benefits the local communities and creates incentives to protect ecosystems.” Miguel - Co-Founder

To measure the impact of their work, Awake focuses on two indicators, number of hosts / local suppliers and income generated to hosts. In 2016, Awake worked with 170 hosts, and in 2017 this number increased by 76% to 300. In 2017, these hosts earned €276,000 in income, up 116% from €123,800 in 2016.



BACKSTREET ACADEMY

Founded in Singapore in 2014
Operating in: Cambodia, India, Indonesia,
Laos, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam
[Preserve and promote local culture](#) | [Inclusive Growth](#) | [Help disperse tourism](#)

Received €400,000
in Booster grant funding

“The Booking Booster was the most amazing programme we have ever participated in! It gave us the confidence to do the right thing and the resources to do it right.” Jamon - Co-Founder

The Business

Backstreet Academy is a peer-to-peer impact travel platform. Backstreet Academy was founded to alleviate poverty through tourism and technology. It offers real experiences to the visitors and a substantial fee for the craftsmen. Also, it helps to preserve cultural heritage.

“Backstreet Academy is unique due to our technology and our focus on communities. Our technology is built specifically for Bottom-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) communities who cannot speak English nor access smartphones. Online bookings from tourists are automatically translated into local language SMS or automated calls with 2-way input to allow hosts to handle their own bookings. To bridge the language barrier on the experience, we also deploy a hyper-local on-demand community translator.” Akash - Co-Founder

2016 vs 2017

Revenue **€137,759 to €205,567**
Employees **10 to 17**
Customers **5,058 to 7,310**

Next to the technology, Backstreet Academy works closely with local communities to ensure tradition, skills and heritage are showcased in the best way possible.

The Impact

Backstreet Academy measures impact across two key areas. First, poverty alleviation - by creating micro-entrepreneurs (as Backstreet Academy hosts) in tourism, providing training and a platform for these hosts to sustainably earn a living, increasing their income 2-3 times, subsequently moving them out of poverty. In 2016, they worked with 567 micro-entrepreneurs (hosts), and in 2017, this number increased to 662, an increase of 16%. The income generated nearly doubled from €110,667 in 2016 to €213,744 in 2017.

Second, preserving intangible cultural heritage is another impact focus area. In 2016, Backstreet Academy helped preserve and keep alive 186 traditions, crafts and intangible cultural heritage. In 2017 this number increased to 213. By allowing travellers to experience traditions and crafts first-hand and generating interest in it, the younger generation will also be more inclined to consider taking up the skill and not let it die out.



DESOLENATOR

Founded in 2014 in the UK
Operating in: Cambodia (for a hotel pilot)
[Conserve natural resources](#)

Received €150,000
in Booster grant funding

“Booking Booster widened the doors of possibilities for Desolenator, allowing us to bring our innovation into a whole new industry. The support, expertise and genuine enthusiasm of the whole Booking team has been incredible.”
Alexei - Co-Founder

The Business

Desolenator is a clean off-grid technology that can purify any water – seawater or contaminated sources – into clean drinking water using solar power.

The Desolenator unit is 100% run on solar power and does not use consumables such as filters, membranes or pre-treatment chemicals. Each unit produces up to 20L/day and can be scaled in a modular fashion providing water independence to a family or several households. A community sized model which will deliver 1,000L/day is currently under development.

“The Desolenator is sold through different channels. During the Booster programme we started working on planning a pilot in the hotel industry, working with coastal accommodation properties.”
Alexei - Co-Founder

2016 vs 2017

Revenue **€250,000 to €350,000**

2017 was the year Desolenator launched their hotel pilot

The Impact

Two-thirds of our planet is covered with water yet we are facing a global water crisis. The UN estimates that by 2030, half of the world will not have access to clean water. 98% of our water resides in our seas but is saline and unfit for consumption.

“If we are to support our growing global community, we must start desalinating. Most importantly, we must do so in a manner that is sustainable, affordable and accessible for everyone.” Alexei - Co-Founder

As an example, the average consumption of plastic bottles for a single resort in the Maldives is around 420,000 bottles a year, and much of this plastic ends up in oceans, damaging ecosystems. Desolenator can purify water from any source using only solar power, making it more sustainable and accessible than household purifiers, multi-stage flash desalination, water trucks or bottled water.

During the first pilot with a Hotel partner in Song Saa, Cambodia, a reduction in plastic bottles, reduction in oceanic plastic pollution and reduction in marine degradation will be measured. In addition, the expected saving in operational costs for the hotel is approximately 70%.



GOOD HOTEL

Founded in 2013 in the Netherlands
Operating in Guatemala and the UK
[Inclusive growth](#)

Received €300,000
in Booster grant funding

“The Booking Booster boosted our core team, the programme helped us prepare for the next steps: scaling up our business so we can increase our impact.” Clemens - CFO

The Business

Good Hotel Group is a profit for non-profit organisation that combines doing good with doing business and premium experiences.

“We reinvest all profits in business and education, and as a result, stimulate local entrepreneurship and development. Good Hotels are located in destinations where touristic demand meets the opportunity for development. We offer travellers to do good, connect and contribute to their travel destination. A whole new level of immersion in the premium travel industry.” Clemens - CFO

The hotel group’s mission is to redefine the model of how business is done – combining doing business with doing good – with a best-in-class guest experience at the core. The team believes that one day, all business should be sustainable and give back to the communities they are in.

The Impact

Marten Dresen (Founder) started providing education for those living in extreme poverty. Later on, he realised that education alone doesn’t change that much if there is no opportunity for employment. People need jobs, and business should be connected to development in the poor communities where they operate. That’s when he decided to establish Good Hotel Group.

2016 vs 2017

Revenue **€2,000,000 to €5,100,000**

Employees **90 to 95**

Customers **30,000 to 70,000**

“Recruiting, jobs, managing, partnerships, profits, investing -- all is built to invest in our people’s future and with a social mission at heart.”
Marten - Founder

Apart from the hotel guests who are able to experience premium hospitality with a cause and contribute to the local community and do good while travelling, the real beneficiaries are the trainees, local communities and local kids receiving education via various NGO partners.

In Amsterdam, the pop-up Good Hotel trained 100 unemployed per year, 60 per year in London, and in Antigua, 80+ jobs were created for local residents (excl. management and volunteers).

Local entrepreneurship and business is stimulated by partnering with small and family-owned businesses from the surrounding areas of each Good Hotel. One of the partners, Rudy ter Aar of Green Recycled Organics, commented, “Good Hotel is GOOD in every sense of the word. They really practice what they preach by educating people who are really in need of a (new) job opportunity. Within 3 months, Good Hotel delivers at least 20 new hospitality professionals in Amsterdam. We are proud to be a partner of Good Hotel.”

In addition, 450+ kids from low-income families receive quality education in Guatemala each year.



LOCAL ALIKE

Founding in Thailand in 2013
Operating in Thailand and Vietnam
[Preserve and promote local culture |](#)
[Inclusive growth | Help disperse tourism](#)

Received €300,000
in Booster grant funding

“Can’t explain my feeling about this programme in words. The Booking Booster just put me in the right place, among the right people with the same mindset.” Pai (Somsak) - Founder and CEO

The Business

Local Alike inspires every traveller to be a change-maker: any traveller can contribute to transforming tourism into a powerful development tool. Local Alike works hand-in-hand with locals to build their capacity and to curate a genuine and meaningful experience for travellers and locals alike.

“We also set up community based tourism fund to help improve the quality of life for each community we work with.” Pai - Founder and CEO

Local Alike exists as two business entities. Local Alike Travel is a tour company that operates community-based tourism tours in Thailand and Vietnam and soon across more countries in Southeast Asia. Local Alike.com is the sustainable tourism online marketplace where travellers from around the world can find and book local, authentic experiences.

2016 vs 2017

Revenue **€370,565 to €535,716**
Employees **15 to 27**
Customers **7,500 to 15,000**

The Impact

The revenues from the Thai tourism industry mainly end up in urban areas in favour of large enterprises, big hotel chains and large travel agencies. Only a handful of local people get to benefit.

“We help distribute at least 10% of this huge income to local communities. In 10 years, we want to be the leading tourism social enterprise that truly showcases how sustainable tourism should be treated in the ASEAN region by using our impact modules.” Pai - Founder and CEO

In 2016, we worked with 50 villages in Northern Thailand, and in 2017, we increased this to 80 villages in both Thailand and Vietnam. In all of these villages we managed to increase the villagers’ income by 15% in 2016 and by 17% in 2017. In total this translates to €248,278.55 of income generated by local villages in 2016 and €348,214.75 in 2017.



SEABIN

Founding in Australia in 2016
Operating in Spain and Australia
Conserve natural resources

Received €350,000

in Booster grant funding

“Without the grant money from Booking.com we would not be delivering Seabins globally on a daily basis right now. Not only did we benefit financially, the booking program gave us the tools to work smarter and understand some key elements critical in getting our startup off the ground.” Pete - Co-Founder

The Business

The Seabin is an automated marina rubbish bin that collects floating rubbish, debris and oil 24/7. Water is sucked in from the surface and passes through a catch bag inside the Seabin. Water is then pumped back into the marina, trapping litter and debris in the catch bag. The Seabin has the option to use alternative power such as wind, wave or solar as a source. It's now being sold to marinas all across the globe.

The Impact

“We were fed up with swimming, surfing and sailing in rubbish. We designed the Seabin to be in marinas in the towns and cities where the most debris enters the water and ends up in the oceans. If we can stop plastic entering the water upstream, then we can lessen the impact on our environment.” Pete - Co-Founder

2016 vs 2017

Pre-sales **0 to 450**

Employees **2 to 4**

The Seabins are estimated at catching an average of 1.5 kg of debris per day. And for each sale of a Seabin, there's a free educational programme tailored for schools and a research programme so the impact can be measured and to learn more from the data collected globally.

“Our dream is that we can reuse the plastics we are catching in a circular economy and eradicate virgin plastics. Essentially, with the Seabin, all of us people are getting a free service of less plastics in the water which means a better value of life for everyone including the tourism industry.” Sascha - Operations Manager

During 2017, six pilot Seabins collected over 275 kg of trash, including plastics, microplastics and oil in different locations around the world. In these same six locations, education and science programmes have been implemented and over 2,000 students interacted with the Seabin. This year, 2018, 500 Seabins will be installed in marinas across the globe, aiming to collect 375 tons of debris. By the end of 2019, the team aims to deliver 3,000 units with a collection capacity of 2,250 tons.



The future of innovation in sustainable tourism

While publishing this first impact report, our second Booking Booster is taking place in Amsterdam, where another 10 incredible sustainable tourism ventures are getting ready to grow their businesses and increase their impact on destinations around the globe

Each year, we feel humbled and inspired working with these entrepreneurs as they grow. We are looking forward to continue supporting a growing number of startups in this community. We will do this through on-going mentorship, connecting startups to Booking Cares Volunteers and more! At the same time, we will keep collaborating with and measuring the impact of the alumni startups.

In addition to our Booking Booster programme, at the end of 2017, we kicked off our Booster Labs. With our Booster Labs, we have taken our Booking Booster on the road - with programmes taking place in Europe and the Middle East. Over the course of 3 days, early-stage startups have the chance to learn from experts in startup growth and sustainable tourism, and are paired with the very best mentors from Booking.com to provide guidance and support as they learn the ropes of growing their businesses. During our Booster Labs in Barcelona (December 2017) and Tel Aviv (March 2018), we have already supported 20 early-stage startups.

To support the wider sustainable tourism industry and all players within it, we also launched our Booking Cares Fund at the end of 2017. The Booking Cares Fund champions sustainable tourism changemakers in their search for new and unexpected solutions that reimagine the tourism and travel space. Changemakers can come from all over the world, representing universities, non-profits, research institutes and governments. Pioneers with bold, ambitious ideas to truly transform the sustainable tourism industry can apply for grants between €100k and €250k.

Through these three initiatives, we're not just empowering entrepreneurs and changemakers, we are also connecting strategic and deliberate collaborators, working together alongside them towards a more sustainable future for the tourism industry. We're excited for what's ahead and hope that you will join us on this incredible journey!

Follow our stories on bookingcares.com



**TOGETHER WE CAN
BUILD A MORE
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
FOR THE GLOBAL TRAVEL INDUSTRY
ONE DESTINATION
AT A TIME**

