

Sustainability Policy	
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Written by:	Robert Moran, Global Sustainability Manager
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ITG Sustainability Policy

2021



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1 Introduction

Being a sustainable and responsible business is integral to ITG. This policy feeds into all three parts of the mission statement: “To create happy clients, to be a great place to work and to have a positive impact on our destinations and local communities.”

The ITG Vision launched in August 2020 has three key long-term goals:

- To be employee owned
- To meet the highest standards of ethical business by becoming a B-Corp
- To give back 5% of its net operating profit every year to organisations providing holidays and vacations to those families who cannot normally afford time away.

This policy will help us become an accredited Travelife Certified tour operator which will contribute to our B-Corp certification and it will demonstrate our commitment to integrate responsible and sustainable decision-making into everything we do.

1.1 Purpose and scope

This policy document is intended to be an initial reference point for all staff working at ITG, our suppliers and our clients. Sustainability covers a wide range of topics so this policy will signpost the reader to more in-depth policies and documents on these topics, if available.

This policy will be made available on the InsideJapan Tours (IJT) and InsideAsia Tours (IAT) websites. A Positive Impact Report will be written every year and made public at least every two years.

1.2 Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Global Sustainability Manager (GSM) and any updates will be approved by the Board.

1.3 Management

The Global Sustainability Manager (GSM) coordinates all sustainability initiatives throughout the company. They are managed directly by Simon King (director). Our Sustainability Action Plan is monitored in regular meetings between the GSM and Simon King. Sustainability Branch Coordinators (SBCs) in each branch are accountable for local environmental reporting and staff and community engagement activities. The SBCs also act as liaisons between the GSM and their branches.

1.4 Training

All staff are offered sustainability training during their induction through our online ITG Sustainability Training modules. There are also multiple external online training opportunities that are offered to all staff. These include topics on responsible tourism, modern human slavery and child safeguarding.

Staff training is tracked and will be included in the Positive Impact Report.

2 Our staff

ITG ensures that all staff, employed by or contracted by the company, understand the terms and conditions of their employment, including remuneration. They are paid at least a living wage that is equal to or above the legal minimum or relevant industry standard.

There are multiple HR policies that include the following:

- Staff Handbooks
- ITG Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Mental Health Policy

2.1 Destination-based staff

Ground staff and guides, contracted by the company, are appropriately qualified and are trained regularly. Ground staff and guides are required to complete the relevant modules of the company's Sustainability Training modules online and are expected to comply with this policy. Freelance guides will be sent the Sustainability Policy at the start of their contract and will receive updated versions every year. From 2022, freelance guides will be offered access to sustainability training.

2.2 Staff volunteering

From 2021 all staff will be given one paid volunteering day a year to benefit their local community. Volunteering targets will be set each year to make sure ITG is having an increasing positive impact with our local communities. Our volunteering hours and impacts will be reported on in our Positive Impact Report every year.

For more information, our Volunteering Policy is saved [here](#).

3 Environmental management

3.1 Reduce, reuse, recycle

ITG are committed to reducing the materials we use in our offices through the following targets:

1. To measure the amount of unrecyclable waste and set goals to reduce it each year.
2. To purchase products made from reusable and/or recyclable materials where possible.
3. To purchase products in bulk amounts to reduce packaging and transportation impacts.
4. To purchase high-quality, long-lasting products and easily repairable products.
5. To provide recycling facilities for a wide range of materials.
6. To train staff on the best practices of how to reduce, reuse and recycle.
7. To recycle used electrical equipment.
8. To only print when absolutely necessary and use digital sharing platforms instead.
9. When printing to print double-sided where possible.

3.2 Sustainable purchasing

ITG gives preference to more sustainable products and services, but also considers alternatives on price, quality and availability. When selecting suppliers, we follow the policies below:

1. To give preference to suppliers and products with an environmental or sustainability certificate.
2. To choose locally produced products and buy from local suppliers where possible.

3.3 Promotional materials

ITG are committed to reduce waste from our promotional materials such as our brochures and magazine through the following policies:

1. To measure the number of brochures printed annually to accurately estimate the number needed for the following year.
2. To avoid printing dated materials or event-specific promotional materials, so they do not become out-of-date quickly and have to be wasted.
3. To only update our brochures every two years with minor changes so the older versions are still relevant and do not need to be wasted.
4. To only send brochures to clients and agents who request them.
5. To only supply travel agents with four brochures of each brand at one time. They can request more if they have a specific event where they are likely to give out more.
6. To offer an e-brochure or a printed copy for clients looking on our websites.
7. To print all our promotional materials on FSC certified or recycled paper.
8. To find the most sustainable packaging option for our promotional materials.

3.4 Carbon management

We have been measuring our carbon emissions from staff travel since 2016, and from our offices since 2019. For the emissions we cannot reduce, we offset the full amount through our partner ClimateCare. We have set company-wide and office specific targets to reduce carbon and will report on these on an annual basis.

From January 2021, all new bookings are fully offset and carbon neutral. The offset includes the emissions of the flights and ground arrangements of each of our trips and is based on the average emissions of our most popular trips with an additional 1 tonne of carbon offset. This ensures that most of our trips are actually carbon positive (more carbon emissions are reduced through the offset than emitted through the trip). The carbon offset fee is already included in all our trip prices from January 2021.

The carbon offset fee from our internal operations and client trips supports the Household Biogas Project, Vietnam. The project helps transform the lives of families in rural Vietnam by using their livestock's waste to produce biogas which is burnt to generate clean, reliable and cost-effective energy for cooking, lighting and hot water.

Our in-depth Climate Action Plan is available [here](#).

3.5 Staff travel

ITG is committed to reducing carbon from staff travel and has implemented these policies:

1. To carefully consider if the trip is necessary or if there is a digital equivalent.
2. To make sure that every staff trip counts – that is has a clear purpose and that we get the expected output.

3. Choose the most sustainable transport option and route.
4. When flying, to choose economy as a default option.
5. To consider less frequent, but longer trips (if required).
6. To measure and offset the carbon emissions from staff flights and set targets to reduce every year.
7. To measure non-flight staff travel from 2022

3.6 In our offices

ITG are committed to reducing the carbon use of our offices through measuring and setting targets to reduce our energy use every year. Our key measures include:

1. Implementing smart heating, cooling and lighting in offices including switching-off all appliances, lighting and heating after office hours.
2. Purchasing energy-efficient electronic equipment and setting equipment to a default energy-saving mode.
3. Informing staff how to reduce energy use when at work.
4. Offsetting carbon used in our offices
5. We aim to measure and offset our emissions from home-working situations from 2022.

3.7 Transport to destinations

ITG advocates our travellers use the most sustainable option of transport to the destination. Unfortunately for our destinations, flying is the only feasible way to arrive there.

As the majority of our clients fly to our destinations, we recommend:

1. Flying direct and avoiding multiple stopovers.
2. Flying with an airline with efficient fleets.
3. Flying in economy or premium economy.
4. Packing light.

This information will be shared to clients on our website and via their travel consultants. From 2021, all members of staff will be trained on carbon emissions from transportation.

From January 2021 all clients' trips will include a carbon offset fee in the trip price to offset their international flights and ground arrangements within destination (see 3.4)

For more information, see our Climate Action Plan here.

3.8 Transport within destinations

All members of staff are trained on the most sustainable option of transport within destinations. From airport transfers, to excursions, to travelling between destinations, our consultants will recommend the most sustainable option, but will also take into consideration price, comfort and practical considerations.

4 Responsible tourism

4.1 Accommodation

ITG is committed to promoting sustainable accommodation. We specifically look for accommodations that place a high priority on sustainable practices, aiming at minimising its negative impacts on the surrounding environment and society and enhancing its positive impacts.

1. We promote accommodations that have environmental policies in place (e.g. Travelife certified ones).
2. We include sustainability criteria in all of our accommodation inspections
3. We will send our core accommodation best practice advice on how to be a sustainable accommodation (e.g. our Supplier Code of Conduct).
4. We will audit our core suppliers every three years against our Supplier Code of Conduct, through desk-research or in person. We will work with our suppliers to ensure that any failings to comply to these criteria are addressed.

4.2 Excursions

We actively include excursions that support local communities (by purchasing services or goods, traditional crafts and local foods and visiting social projects). We also give preference and promote excursions that have recognised sustainability standards. We offer no activities that harm humans, animals, plants or which are socially or culturally unacceptable.

4.3 Animal welfare policy

ITG follows the ABTA Animal Welfare Guidelines (2019) and expects all our suppliers to do the same. These guidelines are based on international criteria and legislation and have been written through a multi-stakeholder consultation process involving international industry experts, scientists, zoologist organisations, associations and non-government organisations.

We will not book or promote facilities that include 'unacceptable practices', according to the ABTA Animal Welfare Guidelines. If one of our suppliers provides an 'unacceptable practice', we will work with them to adhere to the guidelines. If there is a serious violation of the criteria, we will terminate our cooperation with the supplier.

We are working towards auditing all our animal-related experiences and will report on the percentage of animal products audited on an annual basis in the Positive Impact Report.

For more information, see our Animal Welfare Policy [here](#).

4.4 Illegal souvenirs

We do not promote souvenirs which contain threatened flora and fauna species as indicated in the CITES treaty and the IUCN 'Red List'. Neither do we promote historic or archaeological artefacts that are illegal to buy as souvenirs. Our Insiders are trained on illegal and sustainable souvenirs based on these criteria and destination-specific information.

4.5 Client communication on responsible tourism

We are working to include more information on responsible tourism in our client communication.

Our Insiders are trained on responsible tourism and our freelance guides receive our Sustainability Policy and will be offered access to training from 2022. They will then be able provide information and interpretation to clients on relevant sustainability matters in the destination (e.g. protection of flora, fauna, and cultural heritage, resource use), social norms and values (e.g. tips, dressing code and photography) and human rights (e.g. sexual exploitation).

5 Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, and protect them from harm, maltreatment or abuse. ITG are committed to preventing any exploitation of humans that have contact with our business. Our safeguarding policies include child safeguarding and modern human slavery. We have developed policies around these two areas and have trained staff on how to spot risks and what to do about them. The next step will be informing customers about commercial, sexual or any other form of exploitation and harassment, particularly of children and adolescents.

5.1 Modern human slavery

This is a key human rights issue relates to labour standards in tourism. In line with The Modern Slavery Act 2015 which requires all companies with an annual turnover of £36 million to publish an annual statement stating the steps that they are taking to combat slavery and human trafficking, we have published our Modern Human Slavery Statement [here](#). This includes child exploitation, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour, sexual exploitation, securing services from children and vulnerable persons and removal of organs.

At ITG we are committed to tackling modern human slavery. We are taking steps to address these risks in our own operations and supply chains:

- We have an appointed Safeguarding Officer who will form part of a Safeguarding Team to respond to any incidents or concerns
- We have a clear reporting procedure for incidents and concerns
- We offer training to all staff to educate them on these issues, the signs to recognise, and how to record and report any concerns or incidents. We also offer further online training via the ABTA Tackling Modern Slavery e-learning platform and measure the percentage of staff who have completed it.
- We will be sending our Supplier Code of Conduct to our core suppliers in 2021 and will track the number suppliers we have sent it to.
- We have a company-wide whistle-blowing policy

For more information about Modern Human Slavery please read our Modern Human Slavery Statement [here](#).

5.2 Child safeguarding

At Inside Travel Group Ltd. (ITG) we believe that it is always unacceptable for a child to experience any kinds of exploitation or abuse. As a leading Tour Operator in the industry we are fully aware of our responsibility to keep children safe and ensure that our practices and policies are comply with our statutory responsibilities and best practice.

The measures we have in place are:

- We have developed A Child Safeguarding Policy
- We have an appointed Safeguarding Officer who will form part of a Safeguarding Team to respond to any incidents or concerns
- We have a clear reporting procedure for incidents and concerns
- We offer training to all staff to educate them on these issues, the signs to recognise, and how to record and report any concerns or incidents. We also offer further online training via the ABTA 'Every Child, Everywhere' e-learning platform and measure the percentage of staff who have completed it.
- We have a Safeguarding Code of Conduct for all staff as well as specific guidelines for our Insiders and staff working directly with children, marketing, and staff attending familiarisation (FAM) trips.
- We will perform necessary background and reference checks for staff that have direct contact with children
- All staff working with communities or directly with children are also required to sign a child safeguarding self-declaration form
- We do not promote or sell any trips to schools, orphanages and other children's centres.
- Our clients will be informed about commercial, sexual or any other form of exploitation and harassment, particularly of children and adolescents, through the 7 Tips to Protect Children by the Child Safeguarding Movement. These are going to be added to our General Information guides in 2021.

For more information about the measures we have in place to safeguard children at ITG, please read our Child Safeguarding Policy [here](#).

6 Supply chains

ITG works with numerous suppliers in our destination countries (DMCs, ground agents, accommodation and experience providers) and our branch countries (office supplies, marketing outsourcing). We favour suppliers that have sustainability practices and policies in place. When choosing new suppliers, responsible and sustainable practices are key criteria for ITG.

From 2021, we will send our Supplier Code of Conduct to our core suppliers when renewing contracts or starting new ones. If we do not have a formal contract with the supplier, we will still send them our Supplier Code of Conduct with the expectation that they follow our code. We will audit our core accommodation suppliers against our Supplier Code of Conduct every three years (see Point 4.13).

For more information, see our Supplier Code of Conduct [here](#).