

Date last updated:	December 2023
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Authorised by Board:	26-Jan-24
Date to be reviewed:	31-Dec-24

ITG Sustainability Policy



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1 Introduction

Being a sustainable and responsible business is integral to Inside Travel Group (ITG). This policy feeds into all three parts of our 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.”*

Our Vision is to build a global cultural adventure tour operator which leads the travel industry towards a more sustainable future and protects travel for future generations. Since setting out this new vision in 2020, we have since met two of our key goals laid out at the time:

- Met the highest standards of ethical business by becoming a B Corp
- Committed to give back 5% of our 2023 net operating profit to organisations helping families in difficult circumstances get a break away from home.

This policy formalises our commitment to integrate responsible and sustainable decision-making into everything we do at ITG.

1.1 Purpose

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 resources on these topics.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all ITG employees however not all sections will apply to all employees. For example, office working guidelines are not relevant for remote working staff.

1.3 Responsibilities

Global Head of Sustainability

- To inform and encourage staff to follow the policies
- To inform the Sustainability Team of the policies so they can be point of contacts for their branches

Sustainability Team

- To be knowledgeable about the policies and be a liaison with staff members within their branch.

All staff

- To read and follow the policies relevant for their role.

1.4 Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Global Head of Sustainability (HoS) and any updates will be approved by the Board.

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

1.5 Management

The Global Head of Sustainability (HoS) 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 HoS and Simon King.

The Sustainability Manager is responsible for coordinating and implementing the strategy and sustainability plan regarding our trips and destinations. They are managed directly by the HoS.

The Sustainability Executive is responsible for implementing the sustainability plan, with a particular focus on our trips and destinations. They are managed directly by the HoS.

Branch Sustainability Coordinators (BSCs) and Branch Charity Coordinators (BCCs) in each branch are accountable for local environmental reporting and staff and community engagement activities respectively. The BSCs and BCCs also act as liaisons between the HoS and their branches.

1.6 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, human slavery, and child safeguarding. Staff training is tracked and annual completion rates of the Sustainability Training are included in our 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:

- [Employee Handbooks](#) (internal link)
- [ITG Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure](#) (internal link)
- [Mental Health Policy](#) (internal link)
- [Remote Working Health and Safety Policy](#) (internal link)
- [Learning and Development Policy](#) (internal link)

2.1 Destination-based staff

Small Group Tour leaders and guides contracted by the company are appropriately qualified and are trained regularly. Full-time tour leaders are required to complete the company's online Sustainability Training modules and are expected to comply with this policy.

Freelance Small Group Tour leaders and guides will be sent the relevant sections of this Sustainability Policy in the Tour Leader and Guide Handbooks at the start of their contract and will receive updated versions at least every other year. Freelance tour leaders are also offered access to free sustainability training sessions provided by ITG.

2.2 Staff volunteering

All staff are 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 Impact Report every year.

For more information, see our [Volunteering Policy](#).

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 in line with our purchasing policy
3. To provide recycling facilities for a wide range of materials.
4. To train staff on the best practices of how to reduce, reuse and recycle.
5. To recycle used electrical equipment.
6. To only print when necessary and use digital sharing platforms instead.
7. To print double-sided and in black and white where possible.

3.2 Purchasing policy

ITG gives preference to more sustainable products and services, but also considers alternatives on price, quality, and availability. This includes the following product areas: electronics, cleaning, food, office supplies.

When selecting suppliers, we follow the policies below:

To give preference to suppliers who:

1. Have an environmental or sustainability certificate (e.g. B Corp, Fair Trade, Organic, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), or ISO 14001).
2. Are local to our branch, as a way of supporting our local business communities.
3. Offer repair services or spare parts, which can extend the lifespan of products.
4. Provide more sustainable packaging (e.g. recycled or biodegradable) and shipping methods (e.g. low-emission, carbon neutral, or consolidated shipping) to reduce waste and carbon emissions.
5. Promote diversity and inclusion in their workforce and supply chain and provide fair economic opportunities to their local communities.
6. Have a commitment to giving back to their local communities, such as educational programmes or charitable contributions.

And, to give preference to products which:

7. Are locally sourced and manufactured.
8. Are made from reusable and/or recyclable materials where possible.
9. Are high-quality, long-lasting, and easily repairable products.
10. When purchasing, ensure that we purchase products in bulk amounts to reduce packaging and transportation impacts.
11. Consider requesting a sample of the packaging to assess its sustainability.

3.3 Promotional materials

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

Sustainability Policy (2023)

1. To measure the number of externally printed materials annually to accurately estimate the number needed for the following year and reduce wastage.
2. To include externally printed materials in our carbon emissions calculations.
3. To avoid printing dated materials or event-specific information on large brochure materials, so they do not become out-of-date quickly and become redundant.
4. To only offer an e-brochure on our websites. To only print mini-brochures with general information that requires fewer updates and remains relevant and avoid them being wasted
5. To only send brochures to clients and agents who request them.
6. 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.
7. To print all our promotional materials on FSC Certified or recycled paper through a sustainable printing supplier.
8. To find the most sustainable packaging option for our promotional materials.
9. To tell suppliers not to provide us with printed promotional materials when on FAM trips and to politely decline if they do.

3.4 Carbon management

We have been measuring our carbon emissions from staff travel since 2016, from our offices since 2019. Since 2023 we have been working with carbon experts ecollective to measure our entire carbon footprint on an annual basis.

We have set a target to reduce our emissions by 50% by 2030 and identified key focus areas in our Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions to achieve this. We have set several Key Performance Indicators to measure our progress against and will report on these on an annual basis.

For the emissions we cannot reduce, we offset the full amount through our partner Climate Impact Partners. This includes the emissions from all our trips; all our bookings are fully offset and carbon neutral. The offset includes the emissions of the flights and ground arrangements of each of our trips, as well as the operational emissions that go into making them happen and is based on the average emissions of our trips with an additional 1 tonne of carbon offset. This ensures that most of our trips are carbon negative (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.

The carbon offset fee from our internal operations and client trips supports climate projects across Asia which are Gold Standard or equivalent. These have included projects such as the Household Biogas Project, Vietnam, and the Wind Power Clean Energy Project, India.

Read more on our most up-to-date Climate Action Plan, available on our website.

3.5 In our offices

Our key measures to reduce carbon emissions in all our offices are:

1. To keep the temperature in offices between 17 – 27 degrees centigrade (62.6 – 80.6 degrees Fahrenheit) for optimum and comfortable working conditions during working hours and to turn heating and cooling programmes off when offices are not in use.
2. To only light offices during working hours, in the office zones which are in use, unless they are needed for security or other key reasons.
3. To purchase energy-efficient electronic equipment and set equipment to a default energy-saving mode.
4. To inform staff how to reduce energy use when at work in offices by encouraging them to turn off lights and appliances when they are not in use.
5. To conserve water as much as possible by using eco-settings on dishwashers, using low-flow taps and dual-flush toilets.
6. To measure, set targets to reduce and offset carbon used in our offices.

3.6 Remote working

At ITG, we embrace remote and flexible working, where appropriate for the role. In addition to our commitment to reducing the carbon use of our offices we feel it is our responsibility to include remote-working emissions in our total business emissions, and inform and encourage staff to minimise their carbon footprint when working remotely.

This section of the policy applies to all ITG employees who work for any length of time from a location other than an ITG office. This policy is primarily focused on desk work at home, but the guidelines can be applied when working in various locations, such as ground staff working in hotels.

This policy only applies to the time staff spend working remotely, rather than their entire home life.

We encourage staff to reduce the amount of energy used during working hours by:

1. Switching off lights after use.
2. Switching off and unplugging devices when you finish for the day and setting it to 'sleep' or low-power mode on your breaks.
3. Adjusting heating and cooling with energy consumption in mind.
4. Reducing the brightness level to a minimum comfortable level on devices.
5. Reducing, reuse and recycle office materials (paper, ink, stationary).
6. Using licensed and appropriate organisations to dispose of waste.
7. Taking diligent care of ITG borrowed equipment to prolong its life.
8. Using environmentally friendly cleaning materials.

Staff can find out many other ways to reduce their environmental impact while remote working in the resources below (internal links):

Resources

[Sustainability SharePoint: Remote Working](#)

[Working from Home Green Tips 1: Quick Wins](#)

[Working from Home Green Tips 2: Medium Term](#)

[Working from Home Green Tips 3: Big Impacts](#)

[Sustainability Training Modules](#)

4 Travel

4.1 Staff travel for business

ITG is committed to reducing carbon from business travel. We measure any travel taken for business reasons and any other travel for business reasons (not including commuting) that is over 10miles (16km). We offset the carbon used for both at the end of each year.

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 class as a default option.
5. To consider less frequent, but longer trips (if required).
6. To measure and offset the carbon emissions from business flights and set targets to reduce every year.

4.2 Commuting

We encourage staff to travel via public, shared or active transport. Our branches have different programs to help staff travel via these methods. Examples include:

- Cycle to Work scheme in our UK office
- Providing onsite bike lockers and showers in our Australia office
- Providing all staff with access to a public transport pass (RTD EcoPass) in our US office
- Paying a commutation allowance to staff using public transport in the Japan office

For more information our staff can access the following link: [Commuting \(internal link\)](#).

4.3 Client travel

4.3.1 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 most 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 and is included in our internal Sustainability Training modules.

All clients' trips 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 most up-to-date Climate Action Plan on our website

4.3.2 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. [OBJ]

5 Responsible tourism

5.1 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 assess the social and environmental impact of our accommodation through surveys, publicly available data and in accommodation inspections.
3. We also provide best practice advice on how to be a sustainable accommodation as part of 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

For more information, see our latest Animal Welfare Policy on our website.

5.4 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 full-time Field Operations Team are trained on illegal and sustainable souvenirs based on these criteria and destination-specific information.

5.5 Client communication on responsible tourism

We provide responsible travel information and tips in all client documentation prior to their trip. Our Travel Consultants are also trained on our sustainability practices and responsible tourism through our internal Sustainability Training modules. We will continue to work to include further information on responsible tourism in our client communication.

Our Insiders are trained on responsible tourism and our freelance guides are offered access to sustainability training and will be provided with our Sustainability Policy. 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).

6 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. We include ChildSafe tips in our client documentation provided to our clients prior to their trip.

6.1 Modern 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 send our Supplier Code of Conduct to our core suppliers and track the number of suppliers we have sent it to.
- We have a company-wide whistle-blowing policy.

6.2 Child safeguarding

ITG believes 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.

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- 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 orphanages and other children's centres. We do not promote or sell any trips to schools without pre-agreed, structured activities with tangible benefits for students.
- We inform our clients about commercial, sexual or any other form of exploitation and harassment, particularly of children and adolescents, through the Childsafe Travel Tips in our client documentation.

For more information about the measures, we have in place to safeguard children at ITG, please refer to the latest version of our Child Safeguarding Policy which can be found on our website.

7 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.

We 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.

For more information, see a copy of our Supplier Code of Conduct on our website.