



# **RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL**

# **POLICY**

Version 2.0

# RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY



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# RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY



## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>... p5</b>
<b>1. Minimum standards by focus area</b>	<b>... p6</b>
<b>2. How we balance considerations</b>	<b>... p8</b>
<b>3. Accountability</b>	<b>... p9</b>
<b>4. Measuring and reporting: moving from “doing good” to “proving impact”</b>	<b>... p9</b>
<b>5. Governance, review and controls</b>	<b>... p10</b>
<b>6. Consequence management</b>	<b>... p10</b>
<b>7. Supporting guidelines and documents</b>	<b>... p10</b>
<b>8. Review cycle</b>	<b>... p11</b>

# RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY



## Introduction

Tourism can deliver significant benefits, but when not managed responsibly it can also contribute to environmental degradation, pressure on local infrastructure, cultural commodification and economic leakage. Poorly managed tourism can also limit benefits to host communities and result in overcrowding in destinations where visitor numbers exceed local capacity. Tourism is also a contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions, making emissions reduction a critical consideration in how travel is designed and delivered.

In response to these challenges, Intrepid Travel's approach is to create immersive, locally led travel experiences and accommodation stays so the people and places we operate in benefit for our style of travel. Tourism, when done well, can be a powerful driver of positive change. It can bring income into local economies, support community wellbeing, and help protect the places and cultures that make destinations unique.

This commitment is strengthened through this Responsible Travel Policy, which sets clear expectations for how we operate and makes responsible travel an integral part of day-to-day decision-making across our business. Since becoming a Certified B Corp in 2018, Intrepid Travel has deepened its commitment to embedding responsible travel into everyday decision-making. This policy sets out the minimum standards and decision principles that govern how we design, sell, and operate trips and run our accommodation responsibly.

## Purpose and Scope

**Purpose:** To set the minimum standards and decision-making principles that govern how Intrepid Travel designs, sells, and operates trips and accommodation responsibly across destinations, suppliers, and teams.

**Scope:** This policy applies to

- Trip design and destination selection
- Accommodation operations
- On-ground operations delivered by

- Country Offices and third-party operators
- Marketing and customer communications
- Supplier selection and management
- Customer behaviour expectations and incident reporting and people representing Intrepid

# RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY



## Intrepid's five focus areas for responsible travel are:

- **Respect:** Destinations
- **Support:** Local people and the local economy
- **Preserve:** Environment
- **Protect:** People and animals
- **Partner:** For positive community and environmental impact



### 1. Minimum standards by focus area

#### 1.1 RESPECT: Destinations

Intrepid Travel promotes positive and meaningful exchanges between our business, travellers and the places we visit.

##### Minimum standards:

- Respect cultural norms, customs, etiquette, religions and rituals.
- Encourage local interaction and understanding.
- Promote appropriate dress standards and respectful behaviour.
- Seek permission before photographing people and sensitive sites.
- Respect local laws and regulations at all times
- Portray destinations fairly in communications and marketing.
- Protect the cultural and environmental integrity of destinations by not adding to overcrowding.

#### 1.2 SUPPORT: Local people and the local economy

We work to maximise the positive impact generated by tourism for local communities and economies.

##### Minimum standards:

- Employ predominantly local staff and leaders where possible, including through Country Offices and Accommodation operations.
- Design trips and accommodations to feature local suppliers and community-benefiting experiences.
- Consider the cumulative impacts growing visitor numbers on local communities, including crowding and pressure on shared spaces and infrastructure, when designing itineraries, selecting accommodation, and scheduling departures.

# RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY



- Encourage travellers to purchase locally and support social enterprises and local crafts.
- Promote long-term, stable partnerships with local suppliers
- Ensure transparent and fair procurement processes
- Monitor and respond to negative economic impacts
- Prioritise locally produced goods/services over imported products where feasible.
- Support capacity building for local suppliers and community enterprises.
- Expect fair employment practices (including the paying of living wages) in our operations and supply chain, including fair and timely wages.
- Involve local communities in decision-making where feasible and appropriate.
- Pay relevant taxes and operate lawfully.
- Ensure suppliers are familiar with the Supplier Code of Conduct and use it as a minimum expectation.
- No bribery, corruption, or fraudulent activity.

### 1.3 PRESERVE: Environment

We contribute to the preservation of natural and built environments and reduce negative impacts from our operations at a minimum but aim for the restoration and regeneration of natural environments.

#### Minimum standards:

- Seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across trips, accommodation, and operations by prioritising lower-carbon options where feasible, before applying mitigation measures.
- Reduce resource use and waste across offices, trips and accommodation and prevent pollution and

- contamination(energy, water, waste).
- Limit single use plastics on trips and in accommodation, prioritising reusable, refillable or compostable alternatives where feasible.
- Support suppliers to adopt more sustainable practices and prioritize those with stronger practices.
- Follow protected area rules and minimise damage to sensitive environments.
- Apply “leave no trace” approaches where relevant, particularly on trekking trips (e.g., pack in / pack out).
- Supporting customers to avoid behaviour that damages fragile environments (e.g., touching coral or cave formations).
- Seek to minimise pressure on natural and cultural sites by considering seasonality, timing, group size, and alternative locations where appropriate.
- Monitor environmental impacts of trips and accommodation and undertake impact assessments
- Support conservation efforts where feasible, including local conservation initiatives, protected area funding or restoration activities aligned with community priorities.
- Integrate environmental risk considerations into trip planning, including climate vulnerability, fire risk, and extreme weather impacts.

### 1.4 PROTECT: People and animals

We uphold basic rights for those more vulnerable in communities and support basic freedoms for animals.

#### People (minimum standards):

- Ensure our operations uphold the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights: dignity, equality, freedom, respect.

# RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY



- Promote inclusion for women, minorities and marginalised groups through supplier and experience choices where possible.
- Promote accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities where feasible in trip design, employment and supplier engagement.

## **Child protection and People (Non-negotiables):**

- Zero tolerance for child labour, including through any supplier or partner that enables harmful child labour Report suspected child exploitation or abuse in line with local laws and internal safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure staff, crew and leaders have completed Intrepid's Child Safeguarding training.
- Do not include visits to schools, children's shelters, orphanages or residential care facilities in itineraries or press/media trips.
- Refer to Child Safeguarding Policy for detail.
- No participation in activities or use of suppliers that discriminate, exploit or traffic people.

## **Animals (minimum standards):**

- Oppose exploitative or illegal practices and only support animal experiences that prioritise animal welfare.
- Apply animal welfare expectations based on the ["five freedoms"](#) model
- Refer to Animal Welfare Policy for detail.

## **1.5 PARTNER: For positive community and environmental impact**

The Intrepid Foundation is Intrepid's not-for-profit supporting partner organisations worldwide. We work in partnership with community-led, purpose-driven organisations to create positive social and environmental outcomes in the destinations

we operate. These partnerships are based on mutual respect, shared goals, and local leadership, and are designed to deliver long-term value for the wider community.

## **Minimum standards:**

We only work with organisations that:

- Demonstrate good governance, transparency and accountability
- Do not harm people, animals or the environment
- Are impactful in their aims and objectives
- Do not support or engage in religious or political affiliations
- **Non-negotiable:** We do not offer short-term, unskilled voluntourism opportunities on itineraries.

## **2. How we balance considerations**

- Responsible travel is not always simple. Sometimes there are limits in the real world, and we must make careful choices. When visitor demand may place pressure on destinations, Intrepid Travel seeks to reduce impacts through careful trip design, accommodation choices, timing, and traveller behaviour, with a focus on reducing harm and continuous improvement. When decisions involve higher emissions options, Intrepid Travel first considers whether emissions can be avoided or reduced, while balancing climate impacts with safety, accessibility, and community benefits.

When standards cannot be fully met due to local conditions (such as limits in infrastructure, safety, accessibility, or availability), Intrepid Travel will:

# RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY



- Avoid harm wherever possible, then minimise harm, and then reduce impacts when harm cannot be avoided.
- Seek different perspectives and record reasons for exceptions, especially for higher-risk issues.
- Work towards improvement over time, rather than accepting exceptions as permanent.
- Prefer options that protect communities, people, animals, and the environment, even if this reduces short-term business returns.

### 3. Accountability

Country Offices, accommodation, third-party operators, suppliers and partners are responsible for meeting Intrepid's minimum standards when delivering Intrepid trips and operations.

Expectations include:

- Adoption of Intrepid's Supplier Code of Conduct (minimum requirement)
- Participation in assessments, trip and stay evaluations, and improvement actions where required
- Cooperation with incident investigations and corrective actions
- Alignment with responsible travel expectations across people, animals, and environment

### 4. Measuring and reporting: moving from “doing good” to “proving impact”

To strengthen accountability, Intrepid Travel will track and report progress using a mix of:

#### a) Operational and trip performance indicators

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Traveller feedback and responsible travel performance results
- Materiality Assessments and Country Office/Accommodation Audits
- Incident reporting, grievance and resolution outcomes (people/child protection/animal welfare/environment)
- Supplier compliance indicators and remediation actions
- Internal training completion and awareness measures

#### b) Socio-economic contribution

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Local employment and leadership indicators
- Local procurement and supplier participation
- Documented community contributions and partnerships
- Human rights assessments

#### c) Environmental performance

Examples include (not exhaustive):

- Resource use and waste reduction efforts in offices and trips
- Carbon footprints
- Trip-level environmental risk hotspots and mitigations (protected areas, sensitive sites, places at risk from overcrowding)
- Environmental assessments

# RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY



## 5. Governance, review and controls

### Primary accountability

Intrepid Group Core Management Team is responsible for the overall execution of this policy, with support from Intrepid brands and teams.

Functional responsibility (roles):

- **Experiences team:** Trip design, risk/experience research, supplier and destination discussions, compiling trip evaluations including responsible travel performance results
- **Marketing & Communications:** Fair portrayal of destinations; appropriate imagery; engage customers in responsible travel ethos
- **People team:** Induction, training, engagement survey facilitation and evaluation
- **Country Office Procurement and Operations:** On-ground delivery, including staff and leader training; supplier sourcing, due diligence and monitoring; integration of standards into operations; incident reporting support; data collection; input into assessments, evaluations and continuous improvement.
- **Impact team:** Coordination, supporting materials, training modules, support, audits and surveys

### Review and controls

Adherence will be monitored through:

- **External review:** Customer/supplier feedback, including Responsible Travel rating and comments; compiled bi-monthly by the Impact Team
- **Internal review:** Annual Country Office and Accommodation Responsible Travel Surveys; Annual Supplier/Community

Engagements; and Staff engagement survey perceptions compiled annually

- Periodic risk-based supplier reviews for high-risk categories
- Documented corrective actions for recurring issues
- Explicit escalation pathways for breaches

## 6. Consequence management

Where breaches occur, Intrepid Travel will act proportionately and transparently. Actions may include:

- Immediate removal of an activity from an itinerary (where necessary)
- Corrective action plans with timelines for suppliers/Country Offices/Accommodation
- Additional training requirements
- Suspension of supplier use pending investigation
- Termination of supplier relationships for serious or repeated breaches

**Non-negotiable** (child exploitation, trafficking, illegal wildlife exploitation, bribery/corruption) require immediate escalation and may trigger immediate disengagement.

## 7. Supporting guidelines and documents

This policy is supported by the following guidelines and policies:

- Responsible Travel Specific Guidelines
- Accessibility Guidelines and LGBTQI Policy
- Animal Welfare Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy

# RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY



- Health and Safety Policy
- Human Rights Policy
- Stakeholder Engagement Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Supplier Code of Conduct
- Responsible Purchasing Policy
- Responsible Marketing & PR Policy
- Employee/Leader codes of conduct

## 8. Review cycle

This policy should be reviewed every two years to reflect evolving best practice, stakeholder expectations, and the operational realities of Intrepid's destinations and supply chain.

# RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY



