



SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

How we tell the difference between conscious guys and the rest



How we ensure your travel dollar contributes to sustain the community you are visiting

Well, we ask a lot of questions. As Kermit the frog would say, *'it's not always easy being green'*, so businesses and people working for it will be proud to show us (and you) how they do it. A good place to start is by asking for their **Environmental Policy**, a written document stating their environmental, cultural and employment commitments. From there, it's all about getting to know how their business operates.

These are some key questions you can also ask to help you choose operators and accommodation during your travels around the world:

- **What do they see as key environmental issues threatening the area and how are they dealing with them?** How does their recycle work? How do they minimize the impact of their tours in wilderness areas, walking trails, coral reefs, the ocean? How do they avoid overcrowding?
- **Does the operator limit the size of their tour / excursion / activity groups to minimize impact and maximize interaction with the host community?**
- **Do they have a "green" purchasing policy?** What proportion of their products, building materials and services are sourced from the immediate local area? What do they do to reduce packaging/waste? How much of their product is delivered in returnable packaging? How much of it is organic/bio?
- **How do they promote the use of cleaner means of transport?** Is the business located near a public transport facility? Do they count with bike parking and repair station? Do they offer shuttle services for guests?
- **Do they employ local guides and leaders?** You'll get a far better insight into the places you're visiting if you're shown around by someone who was born there and knows it like the back of their hand.
- **What training opportunities to they provide for their staff, at all levels?** Are guides trained in responsible tourism practices, e.g. approaching wildlife and camp-site etiquette? Are they able to interpret the landscape and culture effectively for their clients?



- **What kind of accommodation do they use?** Is it family-owned and how environmentally sustainable is it? What kind of energy source do they use?
- **In what ways do their project involves the hosting community?** Are locals happy to have them here? Have local people been invited to build the project itself? Has the company visited the villages?
- **What proportion of revenue remains in, or reverts to the local community?**
- **Do they work with any local charities or conservation projects, or have they initiated any project of their own?** What are they doing to 'give back to the community'? What does their CSR program includes?

From the true believers – the best practitioners.

Based on the LonelyPlanet's *"How to tell if your holiday is green or greenwashed"*.
Travel tips and articles. North America. www.lonelyplanet.com/