



THE CONSCIOUS
TRAVEL FOUNDATION

CONSCIOUS QUESTIONS

A GUIDE TO WHAT TO ASK AND WHY WHEN
SEEKING SUSTAINABILITY IN TRAVEL



CONSCIOUS QUESTIONS: ALIGNING YOUR VALUE CHAIN WITH YOUR VALUES

Often the simple act of enquiring about sustainability credentials can lead to impact.

Conscious Questions has been designed as a handy reference guide covering the best practice questions to ask your suppliers and why you should be asking them, developed in collaboration with members of The Conscious Travel Foundation.

Benchmarking the sustainability credentials of trusted suppliers from around the world helps travel businesses evaluate the impact of their trips. When weighing up time at trade shows, onboarding new suppliers, writing code of conduct documents, going on a fam trip or navigating how to communicate your sustainability policies with your clients, these questions are designed to help you align your value chain with your values.

These open discussions with your suppliers will also help inform your impact-led storytelling, educating and engaging travellers more deeply with properties and destinations. We hope that they help you open the door to new conversations that shift focus from room rates and facilities, to purpose and impact.

Ideas or experiences to share? Email hello@theconscioustravelfoundation.com or spark deeper thinking on socials.

Be inquisitive, stay curious, and keep asking questions.

#CONSCIOUSQUESTIONS

CONTENTS

- 1 Impact Categories
- 2 Environment
- 7 Conservation
- 12 Local Communities
- 15 Economy
- 18 Accessibility & Inclusion
- 23 Culture & Heritage
- 27 Measurement & Data
- 31 Credits

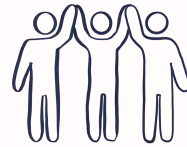


IMPACT CATEGORIES

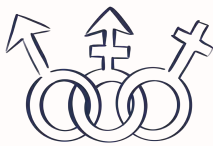
We've broken down this guide into seven impact categories, to help guide open discussions with your suppliers. These categories have been chosen to address key areas of measurable impact, in line with The Conscious Travel Foundation's holistic approach to positive impact tourism.



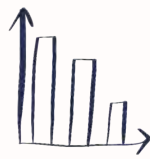
ENVIRONMENT



LOCAL COMMUNITY



ACCESSIBILITY
& INCLUSION



MEASUREMENT
& DATA



CULTURE
& HERITAGE



CONSERVATION



ECONOMY

ENVIRONMENT





ENVIRONMENT

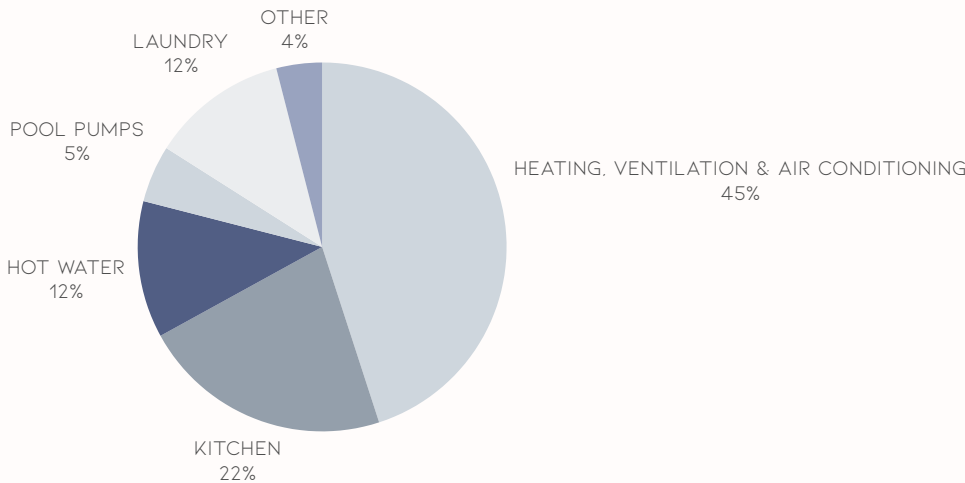
Tourism’s relationship with the environment is complex: the travel industry strongly depends on healthy and functioning ecosystems, biodiversity and natural resources – and, at the same time, it is one of its biggest threats. A sector responsible for about 8% of the world’s carbon emissions, it’s a significant contributor to the climate crisis.

The natural world is the nexus of the entire travel supply chain, so it is critical that hotels and experience operators put plans in place to reduce the usage of water, energy and waste, whilst also coming up with new innovations that help safeguard the environments they operate in.

HOTEL ENERGY USAGE

The Datai Langkawi, Malaysia

Typically, hotels generate the highest percentage of their emissions from heating and cooling systems. Refrigeration and kitchen equipment, heating water for showers, pools and spas, laundry facilities and pool pumps are highly carbon intensive. The below shows the energy use of The Datai Langkawi in Malaysia. The Datai measure and disclose their emissions so they can manage and reduce their climate impact year on year, with a goal of carbon neutrality (when the same amount of CO2 is removed as is released).



1. When was your property built, how has it been modernised or adapted?

Newbuilds tend to be designed with energy efficiency and economic operations in mind, whereas older buildings might be more challenging to retrofit, especially if they are listed or protected. If an old building has been given a new lease of life regarding decarbonising heat or maximising heating and cooling efficiency, that's especially impressive.

2. Are you measuring your energy and water usage?

You can't manage what you don't measure, and monitoring energy usage is an essential step in a hotel reducing its emissions. Is there an advanced building management system (BMS) tracking everything? Do they record all their data in spreadsheets or through dedicated platforms, like Weeva? (See section seven for more detail)

3. Is your energy supply green?

Energy can be responsible for about 60% of a hotel's emissions and the second largest spend. The gold standard would be hotels that are powered on 100% renewable energy such as solar, wind, thermal or hydropower. If they plug into a national grid, it's important to consider what that's run on.

4. Do you measure and monitor inorganic waste?

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates 1.3 billion tons of waste (4–8% of all global waste), is produced by tourism. It's essential hotels recycle and measure and reduce single-use plastic and non-compostables. Many countries in the developing world don't have access to recycling: they need circular innovations and initiatives to help reuse and repurpose. If a property doesn't have access to recycling, start a conversation about how to mitigate plastic usage.

5. How is your recycling or composting above and beyond what is standard?

The heavier the organic waste, the more waste is destined to result in extra-potent methane emissions when it could be alchemised into soil-enriching compost. Food is a key part of any tourism experience, but its production, transportation and consumption have significant economic, social and environmental impacts. A third of food produced globally is wasted, accounting for 10% of human-caused emissions, and 40% of that from retail and hospitality.

6. Do you know the average water usage per guest? How does this compare (per capita) with the local community?

Water scarcity is listed in the World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report in the top five global risks³ — yet it doesn't really get the attention globally it warrants. In water-scarce areas, excessive use of water is especially tough on locals. Hotels with facilities such as large swimming pools and golf courses can be a huge drain on local supplies.

7. What percentage of food and drink is locally sourced?

Local procurement of food and beverages doesn't just make sense from a guest experience perspective; it strengthens the relationship between hotels and local growers and suppliers. Tourism can influence production and what suppliers (including local farmers and fisherfolk) grow, hunt and harvest, and sell (what tourists buy and eat). Hotels and operators should consider seasonality, food miles, supply chains and fair and ethical procurement to mitigate biodiversity loss and carbon emissions and support local food security.

8. Is your seafood sustainably sourced? Is it local? Do you adhere to local breeding season bans, if applicable?

Buying local seafood directly from fisherfolk has lots of advantages, but it's also important that coastal businesses adhere to local breeding season bans and do not serve species whose consumption is prohibited due to breeding patterns.

4

"The Dominican Republic has a range of bans for various species: the consumption of lobster is prohibited 1 March—30 June. If tourists are aware, they can ensure they don't order lobster, and if they see it on a menu, can leave an online review."

—VANESSA ANGELINA, INTEGO





9. How do you re-use grey water or do you have any water-saving innovations in place?

Grey water is wastewater from bathing, showering, laundry and dishwashers. Properties can install greywater recycling systems that treat the water for use in non-potable applications such as toilet flushing or irrigation. Where rainwater is plentiful, rainwater collection tanks are a smart way to reduce demand from the main supply.

10. Is drinking water made available without plastic bottles?

If a hotel supplies drinking water, guests can — and should — use refillable bottles. According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, alarmingly plastic is on track to outweigh the fish in our oceans by 2050 . Plastic bottles take more than a thousand years to break down into tiny molecules, and they require fossil fuels to produce and transport. Hotels often gift reusable water bottles⁴ with good intentions, but ideally guests should be bringing their own and declining another.

11. Talk us through your bathroom and/or spa amenities.

Look for products made from — and packaged in — environmentally friendly materials. Supplying natural products will also reduce the amount of chemicals that are going down the plug-hole and into the local water table. Where small, single use plastic products are still in circulation, It's vital we feed back to hotels to encourage them to move towards refillable products — even better if they are organic and locally made.

1. <https://hospitalityinsights.ehl.edu/moving-hospitality-forward-with-sustainable-supply-and-value-chains>
 2. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/initiatives/food-waste>
 3. <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2023/>
 4. <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/topics/plastics/overview>

CONSERVATION





CONSERVATION

Conserving flora and fauna and boosting biodiversity is not only a climate solution — it helps sell holidays too. Nature-positivity and tourism should be interconnected, from proactively considering how a hotel and its guests are supporting the protection or regeneration of nature, to contributing to local projects and initiatives in the wider destination.

Without tourism, many destinations would fail to keep up with conservation efforts, creating socio-economic and environmental issues for local communities. Creating sustainable livelihoods through tourism is vital in tackling issues such as logging, illegal hunting and disruptive agriculture.

“In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.”

— BABA DIOUM, SENEGALESE POET & ENVIRONMENTALIST

1. Do you fund, support or run conservation projects? And can guests get involved?

This question is especially pertinent if a supplier is located in or around a national park, or operations are linked to nature. Projects might be run by the property or, most commonly, they support conservation charities through a donation system or entrance fees. Engaging guests with the significance of conservation and immersing them in nature, even through simple means, can have a powerful impact. It's not just about appreciating; it's about inspiring a commitment to protect and contribute to the preservation of nature whilst away, and at home.

2. How much are your conservation fees per person, per night, and how are they put to use?

This is a particularly relevant question for African lodges. Whilst fees will vary from area to area, asking what percentage of the total nightly spend goes into conservation will give a good indication of their impact. Understanding how these fees are utilised will enable you to choose partners that align with your values, and allow you to talk to your guests about the positive-impact of their trip. These initiatives should be transparently featured on their website or impact report; be sure to do due diligence on external projects if need be.

For example, Tanda Tula, represented by Classic Portfolio, has a nightly rate of R25,000, with an additional R1,500 conservation fee, amounting to 5.6%. This is a good benchmark and should ideally be shown as a separate cost item, rather than hidden in the rate.

REMOVABILITY

Suzanne Bayly, Classic Portfolio

Have you ever thought about what the impact would be if a particular property were no longer there? Are there alternative lodges in the vicinity that continue to make positive contributions? This is an interesting way of evaluating properties that exist in destinations with mass tourism, versus properties that are pioneering remote spaces.

For example, the impact of each guest who goes gorilla tracking at Kamba Odzala in the Republic of Congo would be very different from the impact of each guest on a gorilla experience in Uganda or Rwanda, where there are more lodges and beds than there are gorilla permits. If there was one less lodge in Rwanda it would make little difference, compared to the one and only lodge in Odzala no longer being there.



3. Is the lodge operating in a national park, community concession or private reserve?

This is always a very good question to ask to help understand the impact of the land relationship, as it will influence how the conservation fees are spent. It's also worth asking to what extent does the property handle land management privately, versus being managed by a private conservation entity or the government. There are various different models, as can be shown by the following four Classic Portfolio properties:

- Kwandwe are responsible for 75,000 acres of private land and manage every aspect of this reserve, with no lease fees, but full responsibility.
- Sasaab is a community concession with the Samburu, with a lease fee and community responsibilities.
- Chem Chem is a WMA, with government and community lease fees and a duty to manage and protect the lands.
- Songa Tented Camp in northern Serengeti pays a lease fee to the government, but has no direct land responsibility.

“National parks and reserves are usually well funded by governments. Whilst channelling funds into these areas is vital, it is just as critical that additional funding goes into the surrounding areas. These are usually private or community conservancies that are underfunded, or completely reliant on tourism to support them. At AMADI, we look to book accommodation options that are in private or community conservancies over national parks and reserves if there are options in a specific destination”

— RAPHAEL CURIGER, AMADI



4. Do you have, or follow, a responsible wildlife policy? Do you share etiquette guidance for how guests and staff should act around wildlife?

Weaving a responsible wildlife policy into the fabric of your business isn't just a tick-box exercise; it is critical to showing your commitment to ethical operations and to guest safety. With wildlife playing a significant part in the tourism experience, sharing your stance — from captive wildlife tourism to wild encounters — allows you to be a steward for nature and advocate for wildlife, and communicate this with guests.

WILD ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS: RED FLAGS

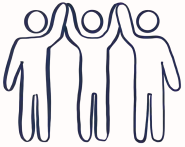
Milo Putnam, [Laro Travels](#), Ethical Wildlife Expert

- Feeding wildlife — baiting animals to come closer, using chum during marine experiences
- Observing wildlife at too close a proximity — tourism activities should not disrupt or block natural behaviours
- Facilities that breed wild animals with no direct rewilding or reintroduction programmes
- Posed photo opportunities with wild animals — these often include parrots, sloths, reptiles, primates, big cats and elephants
- Captive whales and dolphins — 'swim with' experiences, shows and performances
- Wild animal performances — circus acts with trained elephants, bears, big cats, primates
- Direct contact with big cats, bears, and primates — posed selfies, touching or feeding, including 'walk with' encounters
- Riding wild animals — elephant rides for tourists are never ethical



LOCAL COMMUNITY





LOCAL COMMUNITY

Tourism employs 10% of the global population, many of whom come from vulnerable demographics and communities. A socially sustainable tourism business should go above and beyond the provision of local employment, striving to assist with poverty alleviation and giving power to stakeholders who might otherwise be ignored. Engaging local businesses and giving locals a say in the decision-making is essential, as is providing education, healthcare and wellbeing initiatives for those who might find it challenging to otherwise access.

“Travel should benefit the visitor, and the visited”

— ANG TSHERING, BEYUL EXPERIENCES



1. What percentage of employees — management and staff — are local?

The greater the percentage of local employees in the business, the better — for many reasons. Employing locally is essential if they're declaring themselves a sustainable hotel or tourism operator; it helps alleviate labour migration out of local communities and reduces economic leakage. Employing expatriates or residents from destinations further afield tends to send more cash outside the local economy. Tourism also serves as an empowerment mechanism when it provides career development for employees at all levels.

2. Does the hotel support the local community outside of employment? If so, how?

Poverty alleviation and education are big pluses of tourism. Responsible businesses with CSR strategies that assist with education, healthcare and wellbeing within the local communities are the real deal. A good outcome would be an organisation assisting in setting up community-based tourism (CBT) projects or social enterprises run by locals, with the purpose of upping economic empowerment — often advancing cultural preservation.



3. Do you support your staff with training, development and opportunities for advancement?

Staff training programmes are essential in allowing team members to grow and build their knowledge of the travel industry. Without these initiatives, junior staff may miss opportunities to progress into managerial roles, limiting their access to higher salaries. Yet, it goes beyond the hotel walls; with staff role models that resonate with the local community creating a clear roadmap for progress for those embarking on a career in tourism.

By offering internships and external scholarships to school leavers — from chef training to guide schools — a hotel can show a dedicated investment in building a legacy of expertise and prosperity.

4. Are your staff seasonal or employed year-round?

Many destinations are seasonal, meaning that some properties and operators close — or reduce operations — during the off-season. Ask whether employees are left without a wage in low season, or if the business supports them year-round. A responsible business will either pay a salary, even at a reduced rate, or help with food and healthcare support when there are no tourists visiting.

ECONOMY





ECONOMY

Tourism stimulates economic development within destinations through employment, revenue for local business, improving livelihoods, cultural preservation, health, and living conditions. The challenge is economic leakage — the UNDP estimates only 5% of tourist spend stays in the local economy.

1. Tell me about the ownership of the property.

Of all the questions you could ask, this is in some ways one of the most important. For maximum economic sustainability, it's important properties and tourism businesses are owned by individuals that are residents of the country of origin. Large hotel assets run by big international management chains can mean higher economic leakage where profit floats up to international investors instead of down to those most in need.

2. Where is the owner or parent company registered for tax?

Many large organisations don't contribute to the local and national economy as much when they are registered elsewhere — particularly in tax havens.

3. Were local craftspeople or artisans used for the build or design of the hotel? Do you support local makers in your shop?

Sustainable tourism businesses should support local artists, creatives and craftsmen within their operations. It encourages local entrepreneurs to start new businesses that might not have had a market before, and this in turn creates a ripple effect, encouraging others to start businesses and build new livelihoods. Properties that go the extra mile supporting local creatives enhance the guest experience, and create new economic avenues for creatives such as artists, photographers and jewellery makers. If a property doesn't champion local products, it's worth highlighting to them the opportunity they're missing to connect guests with the local community.

4. Does the property invest a percentage of its revenue back into the community?

People are at the heart of places. Choose to work with properties that prioritise and partner with the local community — it is simply the right thing to do! Collaboration with local communities ensures that they are directly benefiting from tourism revenue and are active participants in the local tourism economy. The property should be able to tell you about the impact of their support and how it builds economic and cultural capital in a reciprocal relationship with their local community.

CREATING A NEW FUTURE FOR TOURISM

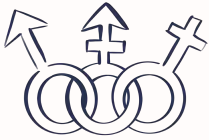
Ang Tshering, Beyul Experiences, Nepal

Spearheaded by The Conscious Travel Foundation mentor Ang Tshering, Phaplu Mountain Bike Club fosters a sense of community amongst the youth and general population of Phaplu, in the Solukhumbu region of the Nepalese Himalayas. The recipient of the Foundation's 2023/24 Community Impact Fund grant, Phaplu Mountain Bike Club is an example of community-based tourism at its best. Ang and the community are working towards building a new mountain biking industry in the region, with long-lasting economic and social benefits aimed at combating youth migration. From building a creative arts and community centre, child-friendly pump tracks, to extensive downhill mountain biking trails to host the pros and passionate mountain bikers from around the world, Phaplu Mountain Bike Club is fostering a sense of community and pride, whilst creating exciting opportunities for the youth of the region through new avenues of tourism.



ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION





ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION

People with disadvantaged and marginalised identities are often overlooked and excluded from our industry, when these are the groups that are also proportionately worst affected by the pitfalls of contemporary tourism practices and the consequences of the climate crisis. Sustainable and inclusive tourism practices will have a prolonged and positive impact on environments, economies and social equity — showcasing how intersectional the tourism industry truly can be and how important it is for tourism businesses to support and include minority groups.

Conscious Questions was created to provide a framework for conversations with suppliers to assess inclusivity, as well as to improve the contextual understanding of critical issues for people with disadvantaged and marginalised identities. It is important to recognise that not all questions outlined below may be appropriate for all suppliers, primarily with regard to the destination in which they operate. As always, we would encourage thoughtful engagement on a case by case basis.

"Humans of all colours, genders, sizes, orientations and abilities travel. So it makes perfect sense to have a diverse staff that are empowered to shape your company to meet everyone's needs and expectations. Diversity in hospitality shouldn't be a box to tick. It's quite simply, good business sense."

— PORTIA HART, BLUE APPLE



1. What is your diversity policy? How is this visible to guests?

Diversity policies, whether published on a website, company Impact Report or included in their code of conduct indicate that businesses are working towards creating an inclusive working environment and inclusive settings for guests.

2. Does your business have a easily-available access statement?

An access statement is a visible policy outlining key information surrounding what is and isn't available and accessible to all. A digitally-adapted accessible website suited to the visually impaired, or with special audio enhancements, signals a business is committed to removing barriers and welcoming all guests.

3. What percentage of your inventory is accessible? Can we see floor plans and images of these rooms on your website?

According to a 2022 report by the Business Disability Forum & Open Inclusion, disabled customers make decisions on where to spend their money based on ease of access and detailed information on websites. Including an 'access gallery' or a virtual tour will allow people with disabilities to more accurately assess whether they can visit the hotel, based on their individual needs and access requirements.

4. What training have staff undertaken in relation to people with visible and invisible disabilities, women, LGBTQ+ people and ethnically diverse people?

With the right support, every staff member has the opportunity to be an ambassador for inclusion in tourism and contribute to the dismantling of barriers and difficulties for people with disadvantaged and marginalised identities. Understanding the level of training staff have received in relation to supporting diverse communities can provide valuable insight into the establishment's commitment to inclusivity

"At Amilla we are committed to all guests feeling welcome, regardless of their diverse needs and abilities with kindness and patience so they too may experience the beauty of the Maldives. Our team have undergone diversity and inclusion training to ensure we treat guests with respect, fostering an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere for all. We are progressively learning how to whole-heartedly cater to a diverse range of needs and abilities."

— NARELLE MCDUGALL, AMILLA MALDIVES



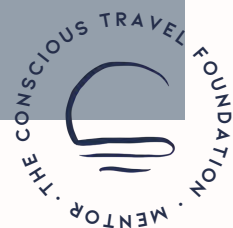
5. How do you ensure equitable access to opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalised people?

Truly inclusive companies recognise the value of hiring and retaining staff from disadvantaged or marginalised backgrounds. These individuals contribute their unique perspectives to foster innovation in the workplace. Travel businesses that provide equitable opportunities and reasonable accommodations to disadvantaged or marginalised people will help them to perform to the best of their abilities. This inclusive approach will have a knock-on effect to the guest experience, creating a diverse culture that will attract and fulfil the needs of a similarly diverse clientele.

"We all want to be treated as individuals and to be valued for the unique qualities that we bring to the table and yet so often companies shy away from selecting candidates for their differences.

Instead, they focus on their similarities. They employ people who look like them and who behave like them, and then they are surprised when their output lacks any diversity. The real opportunities for growth are in expanding our world view and learning from people with different life experiences and perspectives. In order to do that, we need to scrap one sized fits all policies altogether. Let's focus on supporting people that aren't yet in our workforce to ensure it is a safe and equitable environment for ALL in the future."

— THEA BARDOT, LIGHTNING TRAVEL RECRUITMENT



6. What percentage of your employees are women?

Tourism has created a great opportunity for inclusion for all, with approximately 60% of the global hotel labour force comprised of women. As well as being a fundamental tenet of an inclusive business, employing women is a game-changer for our planet, chipping away at the³ colossal challenge of population growth — arguably the biggest threat to our planet's survival.

7. What is the state of the gender pay gap at your company? How are you working to address this?

Beyond employment opportunities; an inclusive operator will ensure equality and parity extends to equal pay, and ensure managerial roles are shared so that women can stand shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts. It's crucial to understand how companies are working to reduce the pay gap, how progress is being tracked, and what has already been achieved.

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN TOURISM

The UNWTO's Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) outline how the private tourism sector can contribute to gender equality:

1. *Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality*
2. *Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination*
3. *Ensure health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers*
4. *Promote education, training and professional development for women*
5. *Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women*
6. *Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy*
7. *Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality*

1. <https://hospitalityinsights.ehl.edu/moving-hospitality-forward-with-sustainable-supply-and-value-chains>

CULTURE & HERITAGE





CULTURE & HERITAGE

Cultural tourism done right can preserve history and traditions that might otherwise be lost. It builds social capital, while elevating the experience for visitors through meaningful engagement with significant sites, national parks, galleries, concerts and crafts. Top of the impact list is trade with Indigenous-owned businesses.

1. How do you prioritise or promote indigenous-owned businesses, artisans or creatives and connect them with your guests?

Artisans are a gateway to educating guests about so many aspects of local history, anthropology, geography, and the sale of their products - through hotel shops, experiences or supporting local art programmes - can also support creatives that are not directly involved in tourism.

2. Does your property (or DMC) work with local guides?

Local or indigenous guides are more likely to have a deeper understanding and appreciation for a destination's unique culture and the environment, leading to a more authentic tourist experience. With guides sharing their local knowledge and experience, they will help tourists connect and interact with local communities, customs and traditions in a respectful way. By working with and supporting local guides, a hotel or tourism operator will also indirectly help to preserve the destination's unique culture and traditions



4. How do you celebrate Indigenous culture in a way that's helpful?

There are more than 370 million Indigenous people around the world, making up 5% of the world's population. Not every destination will feel like it has a natural connection to Indigenous peoples — but it's important to explore how you might showcase and support these connections.

Positive Indigenous tourism has the power to facilitate authentic cultural interaction, boost employment, curb rural migration, support these custodians of lands which hold 80% of the world's biodiversity and allow people to retain their relationship with their ancestral land. Ideally, suppliers should be Indigenous-owned businesses or at the very least, support Indigenous peoples through their supply chain.

DISCOVER ABORIGINAL EXPERIENCES

Karen Fitzgerald, General Manager — Experiences, Tourism Australia

As travellers seek out greater authenticity and cultural engagement, interest in Indigenous tourism continues to grow. And nowhere in the world can claim a cultural legacy quite like Australia, where, for at least 60,000 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have walked the Australian continent.

Tourism Australia recognised the opportunity for visitors to connect with the oldest living cultures on Earth by offering them an authentic connection with Australia through the stories of its people, which is why we established the Discover Aboriginal Experiences collective.

The program was designed to support smaller, owner-operated tourism businesses enabling them to focus on delivering exceptional experiences on Country, whilst the marketing is being taken care of through their membership of the collective.

Since its launch in 2018, Discover Aboriginal Experiences has flourished into a compelling case study of cultural empowerment and responsible tourism. Today, the portfolio features 48 operators offering over 200 experiences, all of which are delivered by Australia's original storytellers and traditional custodians.

5. How is revenue from art and artisan craft passed on?

Hotels should take only a small percentage of sales, or even better give all money directly to artisans. This empowers and encourages local craftspeople, and perpetuates regional and indigenous techniques to help preserve traditions and beliefs as a counter to globalisation.

THE POWER OF ART

Tim Reynolds, Founder ÀNI Private Resorts and ÀNI Art Academies

Established in 2010 by ÀNI Private Resorts, ÀNI Art Academies currently operates six art schools worldwide, two in the USA and four situated minutes from each of the resorts in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Anguilla and the Dominican Republic. While many luxury hospitality brands establish outreach programs to support the communities in which they operate, ÀNI Private Resorts was in fact founded at the same time as ÀNI Art Academies to support and grow the art organization and help uplift the local communities of some of the world's most beautiful destinations. All funds from the sales of any of the pieces sold through ÀNI Private Resorts, goes directly to the artist.

With a gallery space set up within ÀNI Sri Lanka, guests have the opportunity to view artwork within a gallery-like environment - resulting in the sale of over 20 pieces. One young student has sold over 1,000,000 rupees worth of work, equivalent of two years of salary for a local teacher.



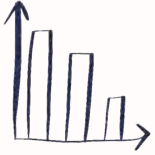
3. What steps have you taken to retain the cultural heritage of the building? — if it's a property of cultural significance.

Historic hotels offer travellers a unique opportunity to relive the past. The challenge for hoteliers operating in historic buildings is to preserve their rich heritage, whilst offering a comfortable stay for guests. Restoring historic buildings can create cultural landmarks, and has the potential to boost tourism and local economies significantly in the process. When neglected, they deprive future generations of a tangible link to history. But when protected, these historic buildings are a powerful way of connecting both tourists and the local community with its history, helping to keep cultural heritage alive.

MEASUREMENT & DATA

powered by **weeva**

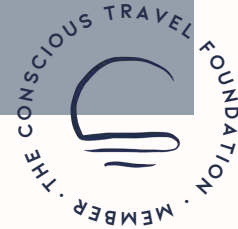




MEASUREMENT & DATA

“The businesses committed to true sustainability have to be able to validate any claim they make, for this data is essential. The team at Tiger Mountain has been logging its sustainability data for over a decade. We now use Weeva as our preferred system for managing data and reporting impacts.”

— MARCUS COTTON, TIGER MOUNTAIN



Our sector is under increasing pressure to bridge the intention–action gap when it comes to individual commitments to sustainability. Real, actionable data and science-based measurements have become one of the few antidotes to greenwash. How a tourism business captures its data – such as electricity and water usage or waste generated – may vary, but the fact they are measuring at all is critical to determining and driving progress.

A crucial step for any hospitality business embarking on a sustainability journey is to prioritise understanding what to measure, how to evaluate community initiatives, and where negative and positive impacts may occur. Hard data and measurable goals safeguard against claims of greenwashing. Data capture underscores a commitment to positive impact, accountability, climate- and people-positive solutions, and a more responsible way of doing business.

It is our hope, at Weeva, that as you navigate through this guide and introduce these questions into your daily interactions with friends and partners in the industry, you gain confidence in not accepting answers at face value. Push for data-backed evidence for the work being done, ask for impact reports and normalise sustainable outcomes as part of every itinerary.

1. How do you measure your sustainability impacts?

Hotels and hospitality businesses monitor data in different ways, depending on the maturity of the business and how long they have been on their sustainability journey. A hotel may be keeping data records in Excel, or utilising a system like Weeva, but what is important is that they have a baseline understanding of their impact as a business.

A good test for maturity is whether a hotel is calculating its carbon footprint and if targets have been set. Also how transparent is the business about their impacts? Are their efforts only referred to in glossy marketing terms alone, or is there quantitative backup to support it?

There are of course data points vital for carbon accountancy, but it is also important to track data related to resources (energy, water, waste, materials) per guest night or per visitor day to understand broader environmental impacts and to make data comparable across groups or properties or to benchmarks. The current emphasis, globally, is on resource management and carbon foot printing, but our industry is responsible for so much more positive impact, beyond carbon.

Fixating on these environmental numbers only means we often overlook the bigger picture and overall net impact of the operation in question.

Tourism may attract a large carbon footprint due to travel and resource consumption, but what about all the positive aspects related to preserving biodiversity, supporting communities, enhancing job opportunities and the many other aspects that are part of sustainability? A sustainability-savvy tour operator would assess this balance when designing itineraries. This is why the 4C framework analyses each business for its unique efforts across Conversation, Commercial, Community and Culture metrics. This allows for a far richer conversation when it comes to the holistic sustainability of a hospitality business.

2. How do you measure your community impact?

Organisations with cultural and outreach programmes usually have a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in place to represent the success of this in numbers. If the partner project is a non-profit, it will likely be subject to an annual external audit, which serves as third-party verification of its activities. Most NPOs/NGOs publish an annual report, which highlights their community projects, number of beneficiaries and positive outcomes during the previous financial year. Community can also include a hotel's employee complement. Ask for information on their policies around employment, and their diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) data to see whether they are making positive impacts internally as well as externally with community projects.

“It doesn’t matter how or where you begin your journey — as long as you start”

— JULIE CHEETHAM, WEEVA

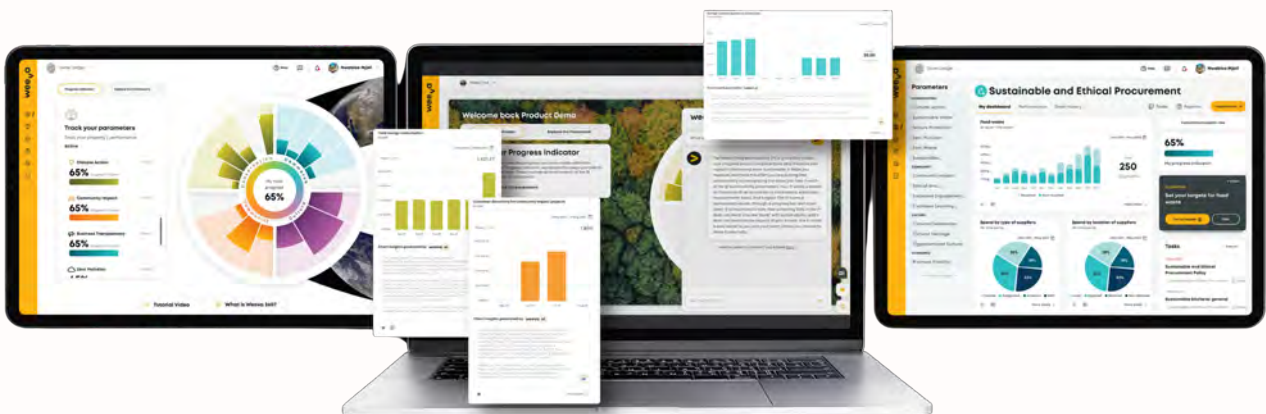


3. Do you have any formal accreditations or certifications? If so, what are they and how were you assessed for this?

Respected sustainability authorities and industry sustainability associations tend to have rigorous checklists, assurance and reporting mechanisms and serve as third-party verification for sustainability claims. Organisations affiliated with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) tend to be trusted, since the GSTC manages global standards for sustainable tourism, promoting environmental and social responsibility.

There are hundreds of pay-to-play badges and logos, where the applicants essentially self-report which doesn’t carry the same credibility. Booking.com has recently removed their ‘leaf’ system, (based on self-report) in favour of certifications approved by Travalyst in support of this notion that certification is required.

Certification may not be the goal of the business; it can be expensive and not necessarily the best path to being more sustainable. Whether there is certification or not, it is advisable to spend time understanding the sustainability goals of the business if they have a roadmap to achieve these goals and how they are stacking up against them. And remember – Weeva is here to help at any stage along the journey to becoming more resilient and sustainable.





THE CONSCIOUS
TRAVEL FOUNDATION

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