

# **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY 2024**



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# Sustainable Tourism Policy 2024

## Introduction

Follow The Camino is a travel company with a strong presence in Spain and Ireland and a successful track record spanning since 2006. Our Company has established itself as a leading travel promoting and facilitating journeys along the Camino de Santiago, Spain's iconic pilgrimage route.

In recent years there has been a notable evolution in the sense of urgency in the message being conveyed. While tourism strategies have begun to emphasize the importance of sustainability as a platform for tourism development, there is a need to work side by side with key stakeholders who have embraced the underlying concepts.

This Sustainable Tourism Development Policy Framework (STDPF) presents policies that can inform a future strategy for One Foot Abroad Ltd t/a Follow the Camino. Policy guidelines are presented for each of these goals.

The overall purposes of this Policy Framework are to promote our company's growth while empowering local people and promoting tourism in those places where we develop our activities in an economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and socially acceptable manner.

Annually, we will publish comprehensive updates on the progress of our commitments, aligning with our strategic implementation plan. This ensures that our stakeholders are informed and engaged as we drive the company forward with unwavering dedication to our goals.



## II. Vision and Values

At Follow the Camino our mission is "to organize sustainable and seamless active holidays that our clients love. We want to create incredible, fulfilling memories, while we still care for our planet and its future".

We are continually assessing the way we work to reduce our impact on the planet and be a more eco-friendly business. We work with locally-owned accommodations and encourage our clients to eat at independent restaurants. Choosing to buy locally-made products and participate in local experiences results in a positive impact on the cities and villages that we travel through. We inform our travellers about their environmental impacts and how to choose better options and keep their footprint small.

We want to keep providing the holidays you want to take, sustainably, for many years more. Our goal is to be the most eco-friendly and sustainable Camino de Santiago travel company in the world.

## III. Carbon Disclosure

The company recorded annual carbon emissions of 1,330 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> during the last calendar year. The month with the highest emissions overall, taking into account the number of customers, was September, totaling 366 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. In contrast, the average of the lowest months, from December to February, fluctuates around 3.42 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. These data provide a detailed insight into the company's carbon footprint, highlighting seasonal patterns and enabling a more precise assessment of its environmental performance.

## IV. Goals

Our Company's STDPF is aligned with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular goals 4,6, 8, 12 and 17 that provide a comprehensive framework for global sustainability, the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET): Developed by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the GCET outlines principles for sustainable and responsible tourism, covering areas such as economic, social, and cultural impacts and The Paris Agreement (UNFCCC) to address climate change among other instruments.

The following Goals underpin the STDPF and guide the structure of the policy framework:



### **Goal 1: Governance & Workers**

Ensure strong leadership and management to guide the sustainable development of the activities carried out by our company.



### **Goal 2: Environment**

Ensure the protection of the pristine environment through sustainable practices, raising awareness of our trip's environmental impact with the various stakeholders.



### **Goal 3: Community**

Perpetuate culture and heritage



### **Goal 4: Customers**

Ensure our customers' travel brings them in contact with local people, raise their awareness of their impact on the local area, safety measures to take into account, and how to travel with the most positive impact possible.

# Goal 1: Governance & Workers

**Ensure strong leadership and management to guide the sustainable development of the activities carried out by our company.**

Ensuring strong leadership and management to guide the sustainable development of our company aligns with SDG 8.9, emphasizing the need for inclusive and sustainable industrialization, innovation, and infrastructure.

Importance of the role of women

It is important to find ways to engage women in tourism. At FTC, over 75% of the company's employees are women. 50% of managerial positions are held by females (excluding Founding CEO)

It will be essential to target women in the development of aspirational stories related to career pathways. For that reason, the first step is to know the percentage of tourism businesses owned/managed by women to promote their activities in the tourism sector.

Develop employment data to support better decision-making

To better understand the experience of our employees and enhance their skills, it is essential to have good data on employment in the sector, to conduct ongoing surveys on employee job satisfaction, to conduct quarterly evaluations on job performance, and to accompany them in the professionalization process through ongoing training.

Sustainability Pledge

Embracing the principle that 'Tourism is everyone's business,' our commitment to fostering sustainable tourism aligns with SDG 17.16 and 17.17, underscoring the imperative for stakeholders to collaborate in a concerted and coordinated effort to achieve sustainable tourism development.

We recognize that partnerships for the goals are crucial for the success of sustainable tourism. By actively engaging in collaborative initiatives and forging partnerships with diverse stakeholders, we strive to contribute to the achievement of shared sustainability objectives within the tourism sector

We will actively encourage and support our accommodation partners in the development and implementation of a sustainability action plan that includes a clear and measurable goal: a 50% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2030. We aim to collaborate closely with them to create and execute a plan that aligns with this ambitious target. Together, we will work not only on employing energy-efficient technologies, water conservation, and waste reduction measures but also on offering options for guests to reduce their environmental footprint. For more information about this point see Appendix I.

## Goal 2: Environment

### **Ensure the protection of the pristine environment through sustainable practices**

*Increase the use of shared transportation, and hybrid electric vehicles by visitors.*

One of our primary focuses is to promote sustainable mobility among our visitors as it was developed in our sustainability pledge. We aim to increase the use of shared transportation and hybrid electric vehicles. By collaborating with local transportation services or offering incentives such as discounts or rewards we are actively encouraging our visitors to choose eco-friendly options.

Community-focused environmental improvement programs will be supported

By exploring and forging partnerships with local community organizations and environmental NGOs, we support initiatives that enhance waste management, recycling efforts, and the development of local green spaces.

UN Global Compact and B Corp objectives will be maintained or increased.



In our quest for environmental sustainability, we recognize the importance of aligning with global standards. To this end, we are dedicated to maintaining or increasing our alignment with both the UN Global Compact and B Corp objectives. Regular assessments and updates to our policies ensure ongoing compliance with UN Global Compact principles. Furthermore, we commit to enhancing transparency by regularly reporting our progress on sustainability initiatives. Exploring opportunities to obtain or strengthen B Corp certification reinforces our dedication to social and environmental responsibility, positioning us as a responsible corporate entity in the global landscape.

### Empowering Sustainable Tourism: Advocating Responsible Water Practices for a Better World

As a conscientious tourist operator, our initiatives align with SDG 6, particularly target 6.b, by encouraging and promoting voluntary actions that contribute to water-related sustainability. We advocate for responsible water usage through our communications and engagement with travelers. We suggest practices that minimize water consumption, support local water conservation projects and highlight eco-friendly accommodations and destinations. By fostering awareness and providing information, we empower travellers to make informed choices that positively impact water resources, ensuring a collective effort toward sustainable water management without imposing compulsory measures.

### Promoting slow travel in the company

As part of FTC's commitment to sustainability and local impact, while for the running of our business and getting travelers where we operate we are conscious of the benefits generated by flights. We however encourage the use of slower, more environmentally friendly modes of transportation. For that reason, we have a Slow Tourism Transportation Policy that encourages the use of public transportation methods such as trains, buses, cycling, or walking. These modes not only reduce the carbon footprint but also provide opportunities for deeper connections with the local people, landscapes, and cultures.



## Green Team Recommendations

As part of FTC's commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility, we are proud to announce the incorporation of recommendations put forth by our Green Team into our company policy. These initiatives include measures to reduce our carbon footprint, minimize waste, and promote eco-friendly practices across various facets of our operations. By implementing the Green Team's suggestions, we aim to contribute to a healthier planet and demonstrate our dedication to corporate social responsibility. We believe that these changes will not only benefit the environment but also enhance our overall corporate image and foster a culture of sustainability within our organization. We encourage all employees to actively participate in and support these initiatives as we collectively work towards a greener and more sustainable future. See Appendix II.

## Responsible Consumption and Production in Action

Embracing the principles of SDG 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production, FTC actively contributes to sustainability through its commitment to responsible tourism practices.

By prioritizing local suppliers, implementing eco-friendly measures such as digital walking notes and maps since 2011, and minimizing paper usage and concise holiday packs, we aim to significantly reduce waste and promote responsible consumption. We also take into account the sustainability of how we operate and purchase for internal and external purchases.

# Goal 3: Community

## **Perpetuate culture and heritage**

Cultural heritage and intangible heritage are key elements of the tourism industry in the places where FTC develops its activities. It is vital to ensure that the everyday life and culture of local people is shared with visitors. This must be done in an appropriate fashion that is informed by the community itself.

If cultural heritage sites are to be linked more effectively to the tourism experience they require protection, maintenance, and interpretation, and tourism can play an important role in assisting to fund such sites.

## Goal 4: Customers

**Ensure our customers' travel brings them in contact with local people, raise their awareness of their impact on the local area, safety measures to take into account, and how to travel with the most positive impact possible.**

Coordinated emergency response system

Emergency response is a critical area for tourism – but also in terms of any form of unexpected tourism-related accident. For that reason, there is a continuous review of emergency incident response time and effective outcome of responses as well as a coordinated plan between our side and the suppliers and other organizations that could be involved.

We inform clients about preparation recommendations, and recommend the purchase of travel insurance - should they get injured. We also give various information about how to stay safe and sound on our trips on clothes, shoes, and day planning to avoid heat time.

Enhancing accessibility for disabled visitors is a key factor in growing a more sustainable industry.

The activities offered by FTC must seek to increase the percentage of tourism services that can cater to people with disabilities. New tourism structures and facilities should be built with accessibility in mind. Tourism facilities should also reflect best practices in accessibility and offerings for people with accessibility and offerings for people with hearing or visual impairments.