

BIOSPHERE GUIDE

2022 - 2023



BIOSPHERE
SUSTAINABLE

This document is an initiative of the Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI) and the team of sustainability professionals at Biosphere.

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www.biospheresustainable.com

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What do tourists want?

Consumption in the tourism industry works differently than consumption in many other sectors. People look for fresh experiences, spectacular places and the beauty of the local area, instead of material possessions or services.

Likewise, as in the world of fashion or food, trends are always influencing the consumption choices in tourism. For example, choosing a destination based on the places that are currently in fashion, looking for the most *Instagrammable* corners or the places whose offer best suits our tastes and interests; which is indeed a decisive factor.

Here are some of the main trends that are busy shaping the tourism industry and the way people travel:

MATCH with the destination

If you have a predilection for nature, you are more likely to travel to a wooded or rural area, rather than to big cities or urban

areas. If you prefer to enjoy active sports, you will probably travel to places where you can practice your hobbies: coastal areas for water sports, ski resorts in winter... In this way, it is a question of orienting the tourist offer to the target group.

ECO mentality

Increasingly, travellers are taking into account factors such as travelling to nearby destinations to reduce their carbon footprint or opting for accommodation with sustainability certifications.

Millennial values

The younger generations, who are now making up the tourism target, have grown up in an educational culture with a strong environmental component and social struggle, giving importance to values that until now were not very present in the tourism industry, such as social integration and inclusion, the importance of the local, sustainability, among others.

Post-pandemic ecosystem

Covid-19 has left its mark on the tourism sector and is generating new trends, mostly related to alternatives to mass tourism, the discovery of new places with little influence from the tourism industry and respect for the destination's environment, its identity and resources.



Public Concern for the Environment is Growing

Recent reports about climate change, together with the news about floods and fires, is raising social concern about this issue.

You yourself are probably already taking some measures to reduce your own ecological footprint in your every-day life; recycling, driving an electric car or using cloth shopping bags are some of the most popular examples for people to express their environmental concerns.

However, are you keeping up with this responsible behaviour when on holiday?

Studies show that many people consider their holidays to be a time and place to relax and to forget about their environmental responsibilities, seeing them as time-consuming and a burden, assuming that companies should be the ones to ensure they are fulfilled instead.

This trend is shown by the results of the most recent surveys of booking portals, where most of the travellers prefer to choose "eco" options in order to feel fulfilled and happy in this respect, as long as these do not entail additional costs or responsibilities of any kind.

What tourism stakeholders can do?



While planning

The website highlights the most sustainable options and allows you to filter by alternatives with sustainable certifications. Only by informing the public, will we get consumers to make more responsible choices.



While travelling

The airline or transport company chosen allows ECO options to be selected, at no additional cost to the traveller in terms of "CO2 compensation".



While enjoying

Possible programmes and initiatives to improve the sustainability of the experience are communicated. However, as tourists we are also responsible for informing ourselves.



New generations are moving from “seeing” to “experiencing”

In modern-day tourism, a very visible trend is that the focus has shifted from “seeing” to “experiencing”. The main focus of tourism is not on physical high-lights, museums and monuments anymore, but on intangible elements such as culture, atmosphere and lifestyle.

One group playing a big role in this shift of trends is Generation Y (or Millennials) who are now between the ages of 25-35.

And we must be aware of their trends, as these are the present and future generations of the tourism sector and of society in general.

Do you know what their preferences are?

- 1** Investing in experiences rather than material possessions.
- 2** Investing in the present rather than saving for the future.
- 3** Seeing travel as a priority and as a way of discovering the world and themselves.
- 4** Young people give more importance than previous generations on environmental care, inclusiveness and social advocacy.

But how can we explain these trends?

>>>

>>> It is understandable that all human behaviour can be explained on the basis of a person's experience; the time in which they live, the context that surrounds them, the resources available to them....

On the one hand, **today's possibilities, thanks to globalisation and the Internet**, cannot be compared to those of previous generations when it comes to travelling. Thus, the new generations, increasingly familiar with new technologies and the power of having massive information available instantly, enjoy countless portals, platforms and websites with a wide range of tourism offerings, adapted to all kinds of budgets and realities, which make designing and booking a trip completely by oneself a trend with great impact on the tourism industry.

All this makes them a **more independent generation, with more informed, open, flexible and spontaneous minds**. They inform themselves through **social networks, consult reviews, book through online platforms and share every experience with their followers**. Thus, with the massive amount of data and the possibilities of new technologies, the "special", the "innovative" and the "new" become attractive to their overexposed minds. Therefore, they are looking for less commercialised, less overcrowded and less "typical" tourism experiences.

This motivation may be genuine, or may arise from a desire to show off to their relatives and followers; to be able to post photos of oneself in places where no one has yet been, experiencing things that, in their social media, no one has yet experienced... Desires that explain the tendency of the new generations to prioritise virgin and less popular destinations over the popular ones of mass tourism.

These **trends, by their nature, can easily help to promote certain aspects of sustainability** at the same time, avoiding the continued overcrowding of destinations already suffering from over-tourism, encouraging visits to generally less populated and outlying locations, and generating new ways of economic growth and social wellbeing, with the creation of employment and infrastructure associated with this new tourism there.

On the other hand, with regard to their pro-environmental predisposition, this is explained by the social context in which the new generations grow up: daily news about high temperatures, extreme and unusual weather changes, lack of natural resources, constant overcrowding and pollution of environments... as well as by the quantity and accessibility of information. Not only on a digital level with the private and individual use of the Internet and social networks, but also through societies' own educational systems.

Indeed, over the last decades, climate change, sustainability, equality and social inclusiveness have been increasingly integrated into education systems, which have also been incorporating values and principles associated with these issues into their structures, thereby raising environmental and social concern, awareness and interest.



Facing Covid-19



The tourism industry is a highly vulnerable sector, and is easily disrupted by external forces such as war, diseases, political instability, natural disasters and accidents, which explains why it was one of the industries that got the biggest hit from the COVID-19 pandemic, causing 2020 to be the worst year in the [recorded] history of tourism.

This historic event has offered a new and complex scenario for the industry, which is forcing the sector to make decisions that will condition it for the coming decades. Will this crisis expose the industry's weaknesses, or will it open the door to new opportunities?

The new paradigm

Although 2022 is the year of tourism recovery, the pandemic has affected the social aspects of tourism, limiting interactions between travellers, local people and staff. With the risk of this virus, people are more uncomfortable in the presence of others and behave more distantly.

However, the Coronavirus crisis is also providing an opportunity to improve

sustainability. Travellers are attaching increasing importance to hygiene, sanitation and de-massification; a trend that is encouraging the involvement of different tourism stakeholders in the field of sustainability and respect for the environment and the promotion of social improvements that contribute to achieving the Welfare State.

Travellers have also shown themselves to be more aware than before, increasing solidarity, compassion and the desire to be with their loved ones, and one of the most promising opportunities that came out of the COVID-19 pandemic is that this crisis could create travellers who are more mindful and conscious than they were before.

Thus, this is the right moment for the tourism industry to embrace more mindful travel, as it creates a change in the system and offers a space and time for tourists to reflect on their own travel behaviour. A trend very promising for the sustainable tourism models.



The world's busiest cities were empty, offering images that will go down in history.

Sustainability and tourism development

Sustainability can be understood as the ability to continue carrying out an activity without compromising the development opportunities of future generations, respecting and promoting the current survival of natural environments, cultural identity and the development of welfare states in all its dimensions.

The importance of the concept of sustainability for the tourism industry is given by the sector's close relationship with natural environments, the socio-cultural heritage of destinations and the inter-connection with other sectors of the economy of the territory.

Its relationship with the natural environment explains the number of tourism destinations located in coastal areas and weather-dependent, which makes

climate change and its consequences a serious threat for their survival. Combating global warming and increasing the resilience of destination's environments and communities is therefore a necessity for the future of tourism.

While the connection and contribution of the tourism industry to social and economic development, there is still a long way to go to reach a level of global and local sustainability.

And although we can detect numerous negative impacts related to the sector, tourism activity brings at the same time large and powerful positive effects on societies. Understanding and balancing these is the sector's greatest challenge.



Effects of Tourism

01. Environmental



One of the most common effects is the overuse of natural resources, which in most cases causes a notable increase in the pollution of ecosystems, drives water scarcity and increases the pressure and loss of habitat for flora and fauna.

However, we must not forget other issues that also affect local biodiversity, such as the introduction of foreign species that threaten and invade local ecosystems (vegetation and fauna).

03. Call for attention



The visible effects of climate change and the post-pandemic context are increasing awareness of the environmental and social impacts of tourism.

This awareness translates into demands from tourists and residents towards tourism stakeholders.

Consequently, stakeholders are expected to take care to offer activities and experiences that follow more sustainable models, ensuring their positive impact on the socio-economic well-being of the destination, its natural and cultural heritage.

02. Climate change



Travel between destinations is the most polluting activity in the sector, especially when air transport is used.

This, together with other elements and production models that are far removed from sustainability, are greatly favouring the increase of the carbon footprint; a situation that is turning against the industry itself with the rise in sea level, the increase in average temperature, the prolongation of heat waves, water shortages or the reduction of snow cover.

04. Leakage



We are referring to the economic and human potential leakage that occurs when foreign companies exploit and benefit from the local resources of the destinations in which they operate;

On the one hand, they exploit and benefit from the local resources of the destinations in which they develop their tourism activity, without these benefits being shared with the local economy, nor are they derived to improve the local welfare state, maintain and care for its cultural and natural heritage, or provide opportunities for the population of the destination.

On the other hand, priority is given to hiring foreign staff instead of boosting local employment, forcing residents themselves to seek new job opportunities abroad.

The Agenda 2030

How can we help to fix the world?

The Agenda 2030 - sometimes referred to as the Horizon 2030 - is the name of the United Nations' plan of action for a future that is better for both people and the planet.

It is divided into 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 Targets, which address holistic issues of societies, including climate change and environment, socio-cultural, economic, innovation and transparency.

The 17 SDGs are just a language adapted to make it universally understood how each of us can make the world more resilient and sustainable over time.

But what happens when you travel? Is it possible to contribute to all these Sustainable Development Goals when we visit other destinations? The answer is yes, definitely yes.

Here is a quick guide to possible actions you can take when you visit other destinations to do your bit for each of the 17 SDGs:

SDG 1. Fight poverty, support local trade.

How and where you consume matters, so support local commerce when you travel. Shopping for food and souvenirs when you visit is a good place to start.

If you support local people when you travel, their finances become more stable, improving the quality of life and encouraging improvements in infrastructure, services and the overall growth and

development of the destination as a whole - something you will no doubt be grateful for on your future visits.

SDG 2. Zero hunger, food for all, sustainable agriculture and healthy nutrition

When it comes to enjoying gastronomic products, choose restaurants, food and typical local products of the period in which you visit.

This way, you will not only be supporting local and sustainable agriculture, but also encouraging CO2 reduction with KM0 consumption, enjoying fresh and seasonal products.

SDG 3. Healthy living and physical, mental and social well-being

Learn about the protocols of the places you visit to take care of yourself and the health of others and follow the guidelines of authorised experts.

SDG 4. Inclusive quality education

Have you thought about going on a volunteering trip? With this type of visit you can contribute your experience and knowledge to those in need in other parts of the world.



SDG 5. Gender equality

We all have the same rights, regardless of our gender. Be aware of sexist language and actions, both yours and those around you, and act accordingly to promote more egalitarian environments.

SDG 6. Water, clean and for everyone

You will have heard many times that we should not take advantage of our holidays to waste water in the hotel with baths and long showers, just because we don't have to pay the bill afterwards.

But what you may not know is that it takes thousands of litres of water to produce a product; making a pair of jeans, for example, takes 10,000 litres of water. So think twice before you go shopping on your travels if you don't really need those goods. Remember that it is the immaterial experience that lasts forever.

SDG 7. Clean and renewable energy

Don't forget to turn off the light when leaving a room or when it is not necessary if there is enough natural light. Likewise, when you go out, especially for long stays, you will be doing the planet a great favour if, in addition to switching off all electronic devices that are not going to be in use, you unplug them, as they continue to consume energy when plugged

into the mains. It will also help you to reduce your electricity bill ;)

SDG 8. Decent work and sustainable economic growth

Share your experiences with the rest of the community when you detect possible vulnerable and precarious working conditions in places where you consume.

This will give a voice to those who cannot defend themselves or are afraid of losing their jobs and discourage other consumers from continuing to support these types of businesses until they guarantee better conditions for their employees.

SDG 9. Industry, infrastructure and innovation

Support start-ups, innovative and sustainable products and services and prioritise modern technologies and processes that help improve social and environmental well-being in your consumption.

SDG 10. Reducing inequalities

Be open-minded and do not judge other people by their appearance or culture. Remember that we are all human beings.

Be social and respectful and interact with local residents. These relationships will bring benefits to your travels, such as tips for unique and very local experiences at your destination.





SDG 11. More resilient and sustainable cities and communities.

Prioritise public transport when travelling. It is more sustainable, which helps reduce air and noise pollution.

You will also have more authentic experiences by moving around like a real local.

SDG 12. Responsible production and consumption

Consume sustainable and local products in general, and prioritise those that are reusable, avoiding single-use goods.

In this way, you help to reduce your carbon footprint and that of the entire production process, discouraging the production of products that lead to greater degradation in their creation and useful life.

SDG 13. Climate Action

Help reduce greenhouse gas and CO₂ emissions by being aware that your actions impact the planet in some way.

Take this into account when choosing a type of transport, a product in a shop, or even thinking about how you can offset your impacts, for example by carrying a cloth shopping bag.

SDG 14. Protect oceans and seas

Don't leave a footprint! If you visit nature areas such as beaches and forests, try to leave the place as you found it.

Identify the waste collection points and, if you find rubbish from others who arrived before you, contribute and make a difference by helping to clean them up. Plants and animals will appreciate your help in maintaining and preserving their home.

SDG 15. Protect the biodiversity of terrestrial ecosystems

Do not introduce foreign vegetation or wildlife into the places you visit, as this will not be their natural habitat; you will make these plants and animals invasive species and probably will endanger the local native ecosystems themselves.

SDG 16. Peace and justice

Behave ethically and respectfully towards those you meet on your travels, learn about local rules and comply with authorities' guidelines.

Give voice to situations of injustice you experience on your visits and foster an atmosphere of peace and cordiality.

SDG 17. Partnering to achieve the Sustainable Goals

If you learn about more sustainable initiatives or experiences on your travels, share them with those around you so that they can experience them too when they make the same visits, encouraging more informed, responsible and sustainable choices.

Develop and communicate the culture of sustainability: Biosphere's philosophy

At Biosphere we are aware of how important it is to know what good practices are applied in the places we visit and in the companies we consume, and where their efforts are directed [environment, accessibility, culture or education, among others].

For this reason, we have been promoting more sustainable production and consumption models for more than 20 years, checking and certifying the good practices of companies and destinations all over the world and developing tools and methodologies that help them on their way towards continuous improvement, under the principles and objectives of the United Nations.

All of this done in a more transparent way, making it known to all people and societies, in order to involve them in the good practices implemented in each entity, as well as to encourage them to make more responsible decisions and consumption.

When an entity is managed, being able to highlight the value of the sustainable efforts implemented with a certification makes it possible to publicise them with a notable improvement in positioning, but above all by maximising the involvement of customers, suppliers and other stakeholders so that they participate in these more responsible initiatives, thus managing to multiply their positive impacts.

Currently, there are numerous seals, pro-

cesses and awards that in some way endorse the practices implemented by companies; mainly at the environmental level, and others more related to innovation, quality, and a whole series of issues that are taken into account in the performance of their activities.

However, what society is demanding today is more holistic and integrated information and more sustainable models in the companies in which they consume and in the destinations they visit. And that is Biosphere's mission: a methodology that aligns companies and destinations with sustainability in a comprehensive manner, connecting their good practices and models with the 2030 Agenda, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the 169 United Nations targets,

recognising and verifying them, sharing publicly verified information so that it can be valued by all societies.

It is only by knowing the effort behind the badges of entities that we can increase social responsibility and drive better results for people and the planet.

Consumers have the right to know how the activities of companies and destinations affect the issues they care about.

By looking at the big picture, we are able to create synergies and commitments to sustainability that involve everyone.





Whether you act as a destination manager, entrepreneur, employee, customer, tourist or citizen, you can also commit to sustainability.

**What are you waiting for to make a change in your daily life?
No matter what role you play, you too can make a contribution.**



[> Go to Biosphere Sustainable](#)

Greenwashing?

We help you to identify it

Greenwashing is a widespread practice, where the aim is to invest in promotion in order to maximise an environmentally friendly image of the entity, without demonstrating or making evident the real minimisation of its impacts. This is therefore a misleading advertising technique, which does not always come from a deceitful plot, sometimes overenthusiasm and unawareness can be the villain.

Here are some tips on how to identify it and help you make more responsible consumer choices:

1. Vague language: terms such as 'sustainable' or 'green' are used without a clear meaning.

2. Look at the overall production model: it is possible that, for the production of a good or the provision of a particular service, the entity prioritises more respectful and sustainable techniques and resources. However, if we pay attention to the entire value chain, we may detect that the general lines of the organisation are not integrally aligned with sustainability models.

3. Pretty pictures: green and nature are often overused without a specific purpose.

4. Tunnel vision: all attention is focused on a specific green action to divert attention from the rest of the practices.

5. Recognition without accreditation or independence: use of labels that appear to be endorsed by third parties but have no backing, which have been drawn up on the basis of biased standards or requirements, and/or that have been accredited by entities with no guarantees in the field.

6. Lack of transparency: claims are made based on data that cannot be verified.

Why is it important as a company to avoid greenwashing?

Above all, for assuming ethical and responsible behaviour, of course. But also because, with figures of more than **85%**, potential consumers view a brand in a more positive way if they know about its good practices, and almost **40%** actively seek information about the sustainable efforts of entities before making their consumption decisions. Given these figures, why fall into this technique when, without information, it will have no real impact on this ever-increasing demand?





Four benefits of adopting more sustainable models

Sustainability must always be aligned with a real commitment to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the environment, based on sincerity and transparency.

Contrary to popular belief, a commitment to developing more sustainable business models does not mean that there are no internal benefits.

Here are four of the benefits that companies achieve after adopting more sustainable production and consumption models; they are not the only ones, but they are the ones most highlighted by companies when deciding to invest in sustainability:

1. Improved image and positioning

Consumers increasingly take into account the impact of a company on its environment. This translates into more customers for companies that demonstrate a positive track record in personal, social and environmental values.

In the tourism sector alone, **83%** of demand thinks sustainability is vital, with almost **60%** willing to pay more for more sustainable experiences.

2. Increases productivity and reduces costs

The development of sustainable business practices favours efficient resource management and, sometimes, this is accompanied by considerable cost reductions in the medium to long term.

Similarly, the adoption of more socially responsible models in the work environment promotes more productive work environments and improves employee satisfaction and performance.

3. Enables to comply with new laws

Increasingly, institutions are enacting sustainability regulations and enforcing greater environmental, economic, social and labour regulations. Therefore, integrating this perspective into companies will give them an advantageous position in complying with legal provisions.

4. Attracts professionals and investors

Aligning with more environmentally and sustainable models makes the company a potential attraction for professionals and investors, who see these as the models of the future.



PATRICIO AZCÁRATE

GENERAL SECRETARY
OF THE RTI

It is difficult to find a person, company or entity capable of carrying out its activity in a 100% sustainable manner.

However, what we can see and value are those good practices and models that are being adopted, with which to implement more and more efforts aligned with sustainability.

To close this Biosphere 2022 Guide, I invite you to learn more about some sustainable actions of different Biosphere members, who form the largest international community of destinations and companies aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs of the United Nations".

Discover Biosphere

[For businesses](#)

[For destinations](#)



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Tenerife, Spain

Barceló Tenerife Hotel

Some of its sustainable actions are:



Promote knowledge of sustainability, with eco-workshops for the youngest customers, teaching them to respect the environment with recycled material.



Prioritise the use of green energy, using its own photovoltaic and solar thermal plants to pre-heat the sanitary water in its facilities.



Promote respect for the marine environment by recycling waste from local beaches in their "Rethink your Garbage" project, where they transform it into eco-friendly jewellery and where guests can participate in designing their own pieces to take home as souvenirs.



Diego Campo

Deputy Director and Deputy Manager
of the Hotel Barceló Tenerife

For us it has become a fundamental requirement to offer a responsible and sustainable tourism with the environment that surrounds us, with different actions focused on its care".





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Moyobamba (San Martin), Peru

Altavista Casahotel

Some of its sustainable actions are:



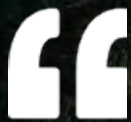
Apply a zero kilometre policy in the purchase of products and raw materials used to offer its services.



Incorporate green infrastructure using natural and local materials in its facilities.



Supporting local SMEs to promote wealth distribution by providing information about their services and products altruistically among their own guests.



Caren Ruiz Castanho
Altavista Casahotel Administrator

The sustainability of the ecosystem developed through the forests of Altavista Casahotel, maintains a balance of plant species, with a rich wildlife of birds, monkeys, and other species, creating a sense of extreme tranquility throughout the hotel facilities. It is nature itself, which guests can perceive and enjoy...".





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Gijón/Xixón, Spain

Laboral Ciudad de la Cultura

Some of its sustainable actions are:

To promote sustainable culture among its stakeholders, developing a programme of workshops on health, sustainable leisure, healthy eating and environmental education, among other topics.



Strengthen its responsible management in maintenance work, aimed at improving energy saving and selective waste collection.



Develop, disseminate and promote a manual of good practices aimed at entities based at Laboral and users of the complex, also requesting their collaboration in achieving the 17 UN SDGs.



Francisco López Prado
Equipment coordination area

For Laboral Ciudad de la Cultura it has been a great opportunity to have a prestigious distinction such as the Biosphere Sustainable certification, allowing us to reinforce responsible management".





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Seltjarnarnes, Iceland

Konrad Tours & Transfers

Some of its sustainable actions are:



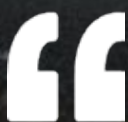
Collaborate with local entities for social purposes, organising and participating in community donation programmes.



Support the economic and social development of its environment, hiring exclusively local staff, as a priority factor in its employability policy.



Encourage sustainable mobility among all its stakeholders, providing a fleet of electric vehicles for the development of its tourist tour services.



Konrad Skulason
Konrad Tours & Transfers CEO

At Konrad Tours & Transfers we are aware of how tourism affects local people, businesses, indigenous cultures and nature in Iceland. Our ultimate goal is to engage travellers in the why and how of Icelandic nature and culture, fostering quality learning, meaningful interactions and memorable conversations, offering unforgettable experiences to our customers in the most sustainable possible way.





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Barcelona, Spain

Barcelona Cathedral

Some of its sustainable actions are:



Promote the work-life balance of its employees.



Support accessibility and sustainable mobility in the territory, providing all the information on public transport.



Report on its good sustainable practices by producing good practice guides for its employees and other stakeholders.



Mn. Josep María Turulli Garriga
Canon administrator

Cabildo of Barcelona Cathedral, responsible for the conservation of the building, is pleased to have achieved the Biosphere label, which links the entity with a long tradition of respect for nature".





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Korpo, Finland

Naawa - Nature Awakening

Some of its sustainable actions are:



Promote efficient water use in their facilities by providing rainwater collection and reuse systems, as well as environmentally friendly and biodegradable sanitation systems.



Prioritise recycling, giving a new life to plastic and glass waste found in the forest, as well as opting to hire suppliers of recycled products for the development of its activity.



Establishing local partnerships to develop sustainable projects, such as its participation in a partnership with the public administration for the planning of the creation of a clean energy network on the island of Korpo.



Sara Söderlund
Naaw - Nature Awakening Owner

The Naawa - Nature Awakening camp is characterised by offering experiences that are truly close to nature, where the preservation of the natural environment is prioritised at all times with the adoption of ecological, vegan and locally traded consumption and production models".



Gran Canaria, Spain

Sky Rebels

Some of the sustainable initiatives that this entity is committed to working on are:



Ensure gender equality by implementing salary monitoring systems to avoid a pay gap among its employees.



Organise guided tours of sites of great environmental value in a non-invasive and non-erosive way, on foot and/or by bicycle.



Collaborate with academic institutions in favour of sustainable development by offering explanatory talks in primary and high schools.



Inés Armero
Sky Rebels Owner

We emphasise the importance of maintaining and preserving our Biosphere Reserve and our cultural heritage. The Biosphere certification will be the confirmation of our commitment to continue along these lines.



The road to sustainability begins



Join the Biosphere destinations community



Join the Biosphere business community

