

The 30-Year Idea



Piano Grande - Unknown Umbria

The idea behind ATG, for the past 30 years, has been simple: tourism should 'sustain' its own environmental 'resources' - features that make each area 'special'. Conserved, these will attract tourism, bringing economic prosperity to local communities – creating the motivation to conserve the 'resource' for posterity. And it works!

The 'resource' might be an area of outstanding natural beauty, white sand beaches, flower-filled meadows; or the variety of plants, birds and animals; or cultural heritage – magnificent monuments, art, music or traditional ways of life. Degrade or destroy these, and the 'resource' will be lost and with it the economic benefits to the community...

How does ATG deliver on this objective?

Commitment

Since 1979 ATG has been committed to its founding principles of Conservation and Sustainable Development - once thought 'naively idealistic'.

ATG works within an accredited Environmental Management System (EMS) - ISO14001. The scope of commitment is demonstrated by ATG winning the world Tourism Industry's two top environmental awards in the same year - *in different categories*: the USA 'World Legacy Award' for Heritage Tourism, and UK 'Tourism for Tomorrow' Award for Business Organisations.

Carbon Neutral

All flights booked through ATG, as well as all ATG Company travel and vehicle use, include the appropriate 'Carbon Offset' contribution (monitored annually by ISO14001). 'Offset' contributions are independently used to fund projects such as reforestation, which compensate for the CO2 emissions.

Low impact

- All trips comprise walking or cycling: travel with the lowest environmental impact.

- Group size is limited to 16 and daily numbers on independent routes are restricted to minimise environmental impact.

Conservation

- Every year ATG and the ATG Trust carry out conservation projects in partnership with local communities. These promote sustainable tourism by conserving the resources that attract visitors to an area, and ensure the economic future of the community.

Destinations

- Environmental Audits are carried out on all new areas visited. Those areas found to be too ecologically or socially fragile to withstand the impact of tourism are not included in ATG programmes.

Pollution, Energy & Waste

- All systems, products and materials used by ATG are assessed for their environmental impact.
- Pollution is reduced by use of ecologically 'green' products.
- Recycling of waste, whether office paper or picnic packaging, is rigorously practiced.
- Published objectives of ATG Tour and Route Managers include keeping ATG routes cleared of deposited trash/rubbish/litter (litter pickers supplied!).
- Materials that are recycled or from a sustainable source are used wherever possible.
- Energy used in manufacturing and transport together with pollution caused is reviewed and alternatives with lowest environmental impact are sought (e.g. smaller, lighter brochures, use of internet etc.)

Economic support for local communities

- Over 60% of all ATG revenue is spent within local communities.

- Most hotels and restaurants used are family-owned and run, so preventing 'leakage' of generated wealth from the community.
- Most hotels and restaurants used are converted from traditional, sometimes historic, buildings, so preserving local heritage.
- ATG picnics and restaurant meals are almost invariably comprised of locally grown (organic) produce.
- An 'ATG Green Shopping Guide' promotes the local 'Green Economy' in each area visited.
- To create employment in the area visited, local people are employed wherever possible.
- All those who work with ATG staff are trained in maximising economic contributions to local communities and so promote Sustainable Tourism.

Who pays?

The Ad Terrae Gloriam (ATG) Trust, which funds the projects, is a registered charity (No. 1082542).

ATG provides support for the Trust by covering all administration and fundraising expenses, so 100% of money donated or raised goes directly to the Trust projects. ATG also funds some projects directly, whilst ATG trip Leaders and Managers play an important role – managing the projects, and participating in fundraising events.

The good will created within local communities ensures a warm welcome for all who travel with ATG.

ATG often receives priority in terms of service and value, so that ATG clients end up paying less for better and more enjoyable trips... Everyone wins!