

# THE JUDGES' VERDICT

Kindly written by Harold Goodwin, Professor of Responsible Tourism and Chair of the Judges of the World Responsible Tourism Awards

This year we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Responsible Tourism Awards with the Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Tourism, run previously with First Choice (2004-6) and more recently with Virgin Holidays (2007-2012). In the last 10 years, the Awards have come of age. They have been rebranded as the World Responsible Tourism Awards, the headline sponsor's recognition no longer extends to their name being included in the Awards' title and 2013 has seen a much more extensive and diverse range of partners and sponsors.

## THE CATEGORIES

The categories were substantially changed this year to reflect changes in Responsible Tourism. For the first 10 years the Awards tended to focus on businesses (tour operators, accommodation, transport), environments (marine, mountains, cultures and architecture) and a limited number of issues (carbon pollution, poverty reduction, volunteering and conservation). This year we have maintained the Best Destination category, broadened the poverty reduction category of previous years to Best for the Local Economy, refocused the wildlife conservation category to look at the tourist experience and concentrated on two issues: water conservation and child protection. Also new this year are the campaigning and photography categories – part of our purpose in organising the Awards each year is our intent to raise awareness amongst holidaymakers and travellers. The People's Choice category was introduced to provide an opportunity for "the people" to engage and they did in substantial numbers. This experiment is likely to become a permanent feature of the Awards.

## THE OUTCOME

Since 2004 we have awarded 12 Overall Winners, 113 winners and 179 Highly Commended across the globe. Details of the categories, winners and highly commendeds for each year since 2004 can be found on the Awards' website.<sup>1</sup> As the Awards have grown in stature we have begun to receive nominations from a growing number of countries and we have seen the launch of other Responsible Tourism Awards; most recently the Catalan Responsible Tourism Awards which were launched as part of the 7th International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations in Barcelona, in October this year.<sup>2</sup> The Catalan Awards were consciously modelled on the process used for these Awards, organised by responsibletravel.com and this has been fully acknowledged.

## THE FUTURE

As the Responsible Tourism movement grows, Awards schemes based on the concept of Responsible Tourism will proliferate; something to rejoice about. Responsible Tourism recognises, indeed celebrates, the cultural and natural diversity of our world which will be reflected in the diversity of Awards generated by it. That diversity should be celebrated so long as Responsible Tourism Awards are genuinely competed for and judges explain their decision making-process openly. It is for this reason that each year the reasons for the judges' decisions are written up in some detail and are published in "Progress in Responsible Tourism". This section is a briefer version of the paper which will appear later in the year in this journal.<sup>3</sup>

## THE SELECTION PROCESS

The organisers of the Awards, with their partners, actively encourage nominations and this year we received just short of 1,000 nominations. The judges do not select the organisations which they regard as the most responsible. They are actually constrained to and limited to shortlisting from amongst those which have been nominated, although we expect the judges to encourage nominations. Colleagues from the staff, alumni and current students of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism<sup>4</sup> (ICRT) work through the nominations undertaking some preliminary research on the internet and applying their specialist knowledge of both Responsible Tourism and the sector.

Under the supervision of the chair of judges and the organisers, they then draw up a long list of between 15 and 25 organisations in each category. Inevitably some Award categories are less strong than others. The Judges' Questionnaire is then sent to all those organisations which have reached this stage of the process. In one case this year<sup>5</sup> all of those nominated were sent questionnaires and the ICRT expert worked through 36 questionnaires to provide a long list of 11 for the judges to consider.

Table 1 Nominations, long listed and returned questionnaires by category

Category	Unique nominations	Longlisted	Shortlisted
Best for Responsible Wildlife Experiences	45	26	14
Best for Water Conservation	26	11	5
Best for the Local Economy	104	36	11
Best for Responsible Tourism Campaigning	23	7	5
Best Destination for Responsible Tourism	27	19	8
Best for Child Protection	30	21	9
Best Photography for Responsible Tourism	n/a	n/a	10

The judges, in pairs, then look at the longlisted organisations and together agree on a shortlist for consideration by all the judges on Judging Day. On the judging day the recommendations of each pair of judges are considered and debated, often at length, until a consensus is reached. Very rarely is a vote taken.

## THE JUDGES

Last year, Ian Reynolds retired because of ill health from the Judging Panel of the Responsible Tourism Awards. Educated at the London School of Economics (LSE), and with 25 years experience as a manager in IBM, Ian brought a grasp of the detail and his personal integrity to the judging process. He served as Chief Executive of ABTA from 1994 to 2005 and was one of the founding judges of the Awards, contributing his wide knowledge of the tourism sector and his sharp mind to the judging process. Ian had a strong social commitment, he was Chairman of the Family Holiday Association from 1995, until his illness and untimely death in October 2013. Ian was greatly missed during judging this year and will be for many years to come. He was involved in the selection of the winners that we chose to put before the public for the People's Choice category.

There were two new judges this year. Simon Press, the Exhibition Director for World Travel Market at Reed Exhibitions with a wealth of international experience, and Dr Michael Pritchard Director-General of the Royal Photographic Society joined the panel to strengthen the judges' capacity in judging the Best Photography for Responsible Tourism category.

## THE JUDGING PROCESS

The Awards are not an accreditation scheme; they are not about certifying an organisation as responsible. The judges seek to identify and celebrate innovation, to inspire change in the industry, and to recognise organisations that demonstrate best practice. The judges and the organisers want the Awards to be the place to share stories about those organisations leading the way in Responsible Tourism.

The judges can only consider those organisations which have been nominated and which take the time to complete the extensive questionnaire necessary to the judging process. These need to be returned along with details of at least two independent referees. The references are followed up and considered in the judging process. There are no site visits; it was one of the founding principles of the Awards that we will consider any business or organisation which is nominated and which returns the completed questionnaire and for which we can get the necessary references. To send at least one judge to visit all the shortlisted businesses would be expensive, precluding some more remote places from being considered. It would also mean that the essential parity of the judges would be jeopardised with some becoming advocates for the businesses which they had visited.

The judges look for examples of responsible practice which will excite interest and help us to drive the Responsible Tourism agenda forward. We particularly look for examples which will inspire and which are replicable.

The judges look for examples of Responsible Tourism in practice that have some, or all, of the following characteristics:

- Demonstrate the application of Responsible Tourism in taking responsibility for making tourism more sustainable across the triple bottom line, addressing economic, social and environmental issues.
- Credible evidence of having exercised responsibility based on the questionnaires we send out to all those who make the longlist and the references that we take up.
- Innovation – we want organisations with original ideas, innovative approaches to solving problems in sustainable tourism, and unique initiatives that drive the Responsible Tourism agenda forward.
- A track record – proven results, demonstrable achievements illustrated with real data, well recorded metrics and detailed information about investment of time, effort and resources in Responsible Tourism initiatives.
- Replicability – practices and initiatives that are inspirational and have the potential to be applied elsewhere, adaptable concepts and ideas that could have an impact beyond their own business.
- Local focus – Responsible Tourism is not limited to a tick list of key requirements, we are interested in practices that address local issues and provide solutions with the local community in mind.

To win a second or third time is tough as previous winners and highly commendeds are required to demonstrate that something significant has been achieved since the last time they were recognised in the Awards.

The judges are independent volunteers, they have no knowledge of the sponsorship arrangements and they are not recompensed for their time and effort in judging the Awards. As Simon Press of World Travel Market commented: "As a first time judge, for the World Responsible Tourism Awards, I found the judging process enlightening, uplifting and very thorough".

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The debate around the judging table is extensive, it took seven hours this year to agree on the winners and highly commended. There is considerable expertise around the judging table from across the tourism industry and they deploy their experience and knowledge in a robust round-table debate to choose the most innovative and inspirational nominees as shining examples in Responsible Tourism. The range of knowledge and contacts amongst our judges is very broad - many of the candidates are known to the judges and in a surprising number of cases - to multiple judges. If all of the judges who know the candidates being considered leave the room there would, in some cases be very few judges left. More seriously the judges would be deprived of the knowledge of those who do know the candidates.

Before discussion of each category, each judge is required to state openly any relationship with, and the basis of any prior knowledge of, each candidate being considered in the category. If any additional candidate is later suggested as a potential winner then the judges are again asked to declare their relationship and the basis of any prior knowledge. The judges then collectively decide who can vote, if the issue comes to a vote, and they have the opportunity to ensure that they are aware of any bias, in favour or against, any particular candidate by any judge. Everyone then takes part in the discussion and can be questioned about the candidates – only the non-conflicted can vote. This ensures that the judges have the benefit of all of the knowledge around the table and are able to take account of biases. It is not unusual for organisations with which judges have close relationships, not to be considered. It is arguably harder for those with which one or more judges had a relationship or close knowledge to win because of the additional scrutiny from other judges.

## BEST FOR RESPONSIBLE WILDLIFE EXPERIENCES

This year we focussed on finding organisations that are committed to wildlife protection and to providing the memorable experiences that tourists will share with friends and family, whilst raising awareness of responsible approaches to wildlife experiences. We sought to select businesses with models that could easily be replicated.

### Winner: Nam Nern Night Safari,<sup>6</sup> Lao PDR

Nam Nern Night Safari has been designed to create direct incentives for conservation. It is located in Nam Et – Phou Louey National Protected Area (NEPL), the last stronghold for tigers in French Indochina, and the only place in the region where visitors can hope to see a tiger or its pugmarks along the banks of the Nam Nern River. Nam Nern Night Safari supports the conservation of tigers and their prey, as well as other wildlife, by placing a monetary value on tigers and other wildlife for local people. Each reported sighting of wildlife by a tourist results in a financial reward for the villagers who live with the wildlife, and this includes people who might otherwise poach. Since 2010 there have been 370 visitors in 142 groups, and the revenues have been shared by 1000+ families in the 14 surrounding villages. The village development fund generated \$2,860 this year, roughly \$200 per village. It has been used by villages to improve their well-being through small projects such as purchasing medicine for a village medicine bank, building a bathroom at a primary school, or purchasing benches for community meeting halls. Although the numbers are small, the initiative has been very successful in increasing the number of wildlife sightings per boats – they have doubled from an average of two per boat trip to four, and visitor satisfaction is high averaging 4.4 out of 5. The judges felt that this approach should be replicable and would contribute to creating a more positive relationship between local communities, wildlife and tourism.

### Highly Commended: ReefCI,<sup>7</sup> Belize

ReefCI has been in business for ten years based out of Punta Gorda town, a small fishing community. It offers experiences of the marine wildlife from the Caribbean Caye, 36 miles from the mainland on the Great Barrier Reef, and operates with a high ratio of staff to guests. The judges recognised the contribution which ReefCI makes to conservation both through the quality of the guest experience and the data which they collect on species and number. The quality of the data on contribution to the local economy through employment and local sourcing was also noteworthy. ReefCI is working with the department of Fisheries in Belize to help protect the marine life and sustain fish stocks and fishing. The data they collect assists fisheries with their allocations of open and closed season regulations, which helps conserve commercial species such as conch and lobster.

### Highly Commended: The Great Projects,<sup>8</sup> Africa, Asia, South America & Europe

This is the third time that The Great Projects has been Highly Commended in the Awards. In 2009, it was rewarded for conservation of wildlife and habitats and in 2010 for volunteering. The judges wanted to recognise the success of The Great Projects in extending its range of volunteering holidays to four continents. People who volunteer on one of their projects have the opportunity to work with, and help some of the most endangered animals. Tourists have the opportunity to work up close with orang-utans, cheetahs, lions and make a donation to conservation. Great Projects carefully manages the interactions between tourists and wildlife to ensure a good experience, and where they do not allow hands on contact or close encounters with animals, they explain why so that it does not diminish the tourist's experience.

## BEST FOR WATER CONSERVATION

2013 was declared by the United Nations as the International Year for Water Conservation prompting the Awards to create this category. Although water consumption by the travel and tourism industry is of increasing concern amongst environmentalists and policy makers, there is still very limited awareness of the problem. This category attracted the smallest number of unique nominations, a mere 26, of which only five completed the necessary questionnaire to be considered for an award.

### Winner: Chepu Adventures EcoLodge,<sup>9</sup> Chile

Chepu offers lodging and kayaking at dawn, *"in silence, surrounded by morning mist, the reflections of sun rays and the song of birds giving thanks to a new day"*; and kayaking in *"the sunken forest escorted by river otters."* One of the owners is an engineer and the lodge uses only rain water in the bathrooms and kitchen, harvested from the roofs of the lodge and stored in a well and large water tanks. Chepu uses solar water heaters to provide hot water for showers and the kitchen; its electricity is provided by wind and solar energy. Chepu offers *"comfortable beds and soft white linens with the aromas of nature after they have been dried out to the fresh air, and home cuisine with organic and natural products provided by local green houses and family farming"*. Chepu demonstrates that the frugal use of water does not have to mean a spartan experience.

The judges were particularly impressed by the way in which Chepu engages the visitor enabling them to monitor their own water consumption by providing them with electronic feedback on the amount of water they are using. If customers keep within their *"eco-limit"* they can choose to have a tree planted in Patagonia or a reduction on their bill. There is sophisticated shower control: every time the button is pressed the shower starts and stops, allowing clients to get wet, stop the shower, soap, rinse and so on for three effective minutes, using a total of 21 litres of water. Clients can prolong the shower time by reducing the water flow and the shower delivers at 39°C so that guest satisfaction remains high.

### Highly Commended: Chumbe Island Coral Park,<sup>10</sup> off the coast of Zanzibar/Tanzania

Chumbe Island Coral Park is the first marine park in Tanzania; and the first private marine park in the world fully funded through eco-tourism. Water pollution is a direct threat to coral and the management of fresh and waste water has been a priority from the original conception of Chumbe. The judges were impressed by the care which has been taken to manage the whole water system in an ecologically benign way. Each eco-bungalow has its own rainwater catchment system, which collects the seasonal rains on all roof surfaces, feeds it through sand and gravel filters and then stores it in underground cisterns under each building. Sewage is avoided by the use of composting toilets; shower water and other grey water from the kitchens is filtered through a reed system and through garden plots using specialised vegetation to ensure that there is no pollution of the environment.

## BEST FOR THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Much is made of the contribution which tourism makes to economic development globally. For this category, the judges looked for evidence of commendable and significant benefits to the local economy and local people through employment or local sourcing.

### Winner: Village Ways,<sup>11</sup> India and Ethiopia

Village Ways was recognised in 2009 as the Best Tour Operator for Cultural Engagement. This time the judges were impressed by their innovative and distinctive business model. In order to discourage out-migration and to create additional livelihoods in marginal rural areas, Village Ways has developed a business strategy based on Village Tourism Enterprises: tourists walk from village to village accompanied by local guides, eating locally grown and prepared meals and enjoying local traditional singing,

music and dancing. Walking from village to village, guests travel *"like a local"* and have the opportunity to interact with villagers; and if they wish, to participate in village activities. Village Ways has brought significant income to rural households struggling against poverty.

The Village Ways Partnership<sup>11a</sup> is a social enterprise, established to support and benefit culturally rich, but economically poor rural communities through the development of viable village enterprises capable of generating both community and household benefits. The Partnership provides the technical expertise and the marketing and distribution support necessary for the development of a network of profitable village enterprises. The Founders' Charter commits Village Ways to its social purpose: *"developing responsible tourism in partnership with poorer rural communities, in order to sustain village life and culture, improve livelihoods in remote rural areas and reduce the need for outward migration"*.<sup>11b</sup> Village Ways seeks to create self-reliant local Village Tourism Enterprises (VTEs), each of which is sufficiently profitable to benefit the wider community by creating additional sources of community, household and individual income. Fundamental to Village Ways are the principles that good businesses, to be sustainable, must be profitable and that *"all business units are profitable from the grass roots up"*; this is ensured by providing a targeted route to market, offering travel experiences with a true essence of people and places.

### Highly Commended: Basecamp Explorer Kenya<sup>12</sup>, Masai Mara, Kenya

Basecamp Explorer Kenya operates three camps in the Masai Mara ecosystem and they have won many awards for their work on wildlife and conservation. Basecamp Explorer was previously recognised in 2005 when it won the Protected Area category. This year, the judges wanted to recognise two particular initiatives which, in their opinion, are highly replicable: the Basecamp Masai Brand and the Community Managed Micro-Finance (CMMF) programme launched in 2010. The CMMF created 17 savings groups of women, doing beadwork, bee keeping and livestock fattening. The CMMF now involves some 400 women and the programme has been replicated for example in the Olonana project. The Basecamp Masai Brand creates livelihoods for 118 women; only recycled raw materials are used and the women themselves design and price the products. They have also been very active in the creation of the Mara Naboisho Conservancy highly commended in Best Destination this year.

## BEST FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM CAMPAIGNING

The judges were looking for examples of campaigns where a problem had been identified by an individual or group, where they have been successful in establishing that there is an issue which needs to be addressed by the industry, in originating markets and/or destinations. In addition, industry practice needs to change. Successful campaigns are those where an issue is raised and the first stage of the campaign establishes that something must be done about it; then solutions are proposed and argued for, support is secured and practice changes. Both of the campaign organisations recognised here are small and have achieved success with very few resources.

### Winner: people and places,<sup>13</sup> UK

Highly commended in 2007 in the Best Volunteering category, they won this same category in 2009. The judges were impressed by their campaign for responsible volunteering; they have also been active in campaigning for child protection whilst running their small business. Their campaign has been funded entirely through their business. Making extensive use of the social media the two directors have given their time freely to fight for change in the industry. One of their independent referees wrote of them *"setting the Gold Standard in Responsible Volunteering... people and places are not an NGO that preaches from the rooftops – they are a frontline organisation developing best practice by mixed channels of communication, discussion, sensitive listening, and, most of all by practical application of the concepts in the field."* Over the last few years practice in volunteering has improved, although there is still much to be done; people and places have been at the heart of that movement tirelessly to raise awareness and demand action, working with many partners in the UK and abroad.

### Highly Commended: Snowcarbon,<sup>14</sup> UK and the Alps

Snowcarbon was highly commended in 2010 in the Best for Low Carbon Transport & Technology category. Owned by two travel journalists, it campaigns to increase the sustainability of ski holidays by encouraging, enabling and inspiring skiers to travel to ski resorts by train instead of flying or driving. Snowcarbon's journey planner provides an easy means for skiers to book their journey to the slopes and they have partnered with the Ski Club of Great Britain to promote rail travel to ski resorts. The introduction of the Journey Planner and its associated iframes on other ski websites coincided with a 125% increase in visits to Snowcarbon over 12 months. Their plane versus train film<sup>14a</sup> has so far been viewed over 950 times on Rail Europe, 3,700 on Ski Club and 5,700 on YouTube. They avoided 'guilt mongering' about flying (some skiers have no viable alternative but to fly), instead they concentrated on the advantages of rail travel and the idea of *"taking the train whenever possible"*.

## BEST DESTINATION FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

The Best Destination for Responsible Tourism recognises a village, town, city, region or country that strongly promotes responsible tourism practices to tourists. Previous winners have included St Kilda in Scotland, Roros in Norway, Aspen in the USA, and New Zealand – each has something to offer that others might replicate.

### Winner: Bonito,<sup>15</sup> Brazil

Bonito was launched as a tourism destination when its natural beauty was revealed on Brazilian television in 1990; in 2012 it received 190,000 tourists. Bonito is located on a plateau in the Serra do Bodoquena, south of the Pantanal. Bonito is famous for its crystal clear waters, caves, mountain and forests with diverse wildlife to be found in a national park and ten private reserves. As tourists began to arrive several concerns emerged: there was fear that unregulated tourism could impact on the environment and particularly the crystal clear waters; questions were raised about the effects of heightened competition if each business sought to maximise its arrivals, and about the impact on Bonito's reputation if tourists travelled 30 miles to a ranch only to find that it was full.

The private sector businesses and the public authorities realised that tourism development in Bonito needed to be managed within the carrying capacity of the natural environment and the tourism facilities available. All the operators in Bonito use the same voucher system, known locally as *"Vale Cash"*. The voucher confers the services of a guide, the activity and the accommodation. The voucher system also ensures tax revenue for the municipality, and businesses are unable to under-report their business volumes. The judges were impressed by the voucher system and keen to recognise its contribution to ensuring the sustainability of the destination. As a successful tourism destination able to protect its environment and offer high quality tourism experiences, with a strong tax base, Bonito has good social indices and low crime.

### Highly Commended: Nature Park & Glacier Region Kaunertal<sup>16</sup>, Austria

Kaunertal is the gateway to a glacier ski area, at 2,200-3,000 metres in the Tyrolean Alps. The judges were impressed by the work which has been done in Kaunertal to enable wheelchair users, people with reduced mobility, families with small children and strollers, to enjoy unrestricted barrier-free active vacations throughout the year. Kaunertal has been working for over 30 years to make the destination accessible and the work continues, with local entrepreneurs managing to create a unique and comprehensive Alpine product accessible to all - starting with appropriate accommodations, cable cars, local attractions and transport, and extending to public facilities and accessible travel adventure

facilities. The judges were impressed by the sustained commitment to make Kaunertal as accessible to people with limited mobility as it is to the able-bodied. Today, 12% of overnight stays are by people

### Highly Commended: Mara Naboisho Conservancy,<sup>17</sup> Masai Mara Kenya

The Mara Naboisho conservancy, Kenya's first conservation social enterprise, was established in 2010 with, rather than for, the community. The Maasai word Naboisho means 'coming together' and the judges were impressed with the transparency of the partnership arrangements between the tourism investors and Maasai landowners. The purpose of the conservancy was to secure livelihoods for local people. Tourism was not the purpose although it is a means. Naboisho became the first conservancy to get a 15 year lease from landowners with rent payable monthly directly to the owners' bank accounts. \$700,000 is paid annually as land rent by the tourism partners regardless of their occupancy. All the camps in Naboisho employ between 85%-95% local Maasai staff and 95% of the conservancy staff are local Maasai community members. Naboisho has set up a community development programme, which provides a range of benefits including clean water points, clinics, solar energy, classrooms and scholarships for girls.

### Highly Commended: Valleys Regional Park,<sup>18</sup> Wales

There are other tourism ambassador programmes in the UK but the judges wanted to recognise the Valleys Community Tourism Ambassador Programme, for developing, what one of its independent referees described as "passion filled tourist destinations". The referee continues "one can't help but be moved by the warmth of the welcome and the feelings expressed by the Ambassadors when guiding visitors through the history and legends of the locations, including ancient castles and ruins, industrial heritage, modern activities and the natural beauty of the spectacular landscapes." The Valleys Regional Park sits between the Brecon Beacons National Park and the coastal cities of Cardiff, Swansea and Newport, home to one million people, a third of the Welsh population. Over 40 organisations including Natural Resources Wales, 12 Local authorities, Groundwork, wildlife trusts, Keep Wales Tidy and a host of others have come together to reverse the area's recent history of economic downturn and neglect. Tourism has been used to contribute to community regeneration on a large scale.

### BEST FOR CHILD PROTECTION

The protection of children from labour and sexual exploitation in tourism is a serious problem, far too rarely mentioned in the press. This results in many holidaymakers lacking awareness about the issue. This year, we are trying to address this problem and this is why we have created the Best for Child Protection category.

30 different organisations were nominated for this category reflecting the many groups, businesses, international and local NGOs, which are actively tackling this scourge. Unfortunately the travel and tourism industry can unwittingly facilitate child trafficking, the sexual exploitation of children and other abuses.

### Winner: Tui Nederland<sup>19</sup>

The judges were impressed by the scale of TUI Nederland's response to the challenge of child protection and its holistic approach. They have developed policies and trained staff to identify child abuse, whether amongst the families for whom they provide holidays or abuse perpetrated by travellers in the destination. They have been working to protect children from abuse since 2002 when they signed the Child Protection Code with ECPAT Nederland. They have worked to embed child protection into their routine business operations and have extended this commitment through their network of supplier and partners.

Realising that child sex tourism is silently growing in the Northeast of Brazil, TUI Nederland and its Brazil local partners, Childhood Brazil, RESPOSTA and Plan Brazil together with partners in the Netherlands (the Dutch tourism association ANVR, Travel Counsellors, Fly Brazil Nederland, Plan Nederland and ECPAT Nederland) launches a campaign to say "a collective 'NO' to child sex tourism in the Northeast of Brazil". TUI Nederland has contributed over €100,000 since 2008; 80 adolescents from 14 to 17 years of age, studying in public schools, have been trained as 'youth mobilizers', for the prevention of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, reaching over 2,000 people. Their vocational training programme has 104 graduates of whom 39 were employed throughout 2012.

(more can be read about TUI Nederland in the section "Overall Winner").

### Highly Commended: Friends International<sup>20</sup> for ChildSafe Network in Cambodia, Lao, Thailand & Indonesia

Friends-International (FI) is a social enterprise working with children and their families by providing education and training to assist them in becoming productive members of their society in Cambodia, Lao, Thailand & Indonesia. It works with NGO partners in Honduras, the Philippines and Egypt. FI works with families to provide vulnerable children with access to informal education, preparing them for a school environment, then integrating them into their local public school system. They also offer vocational training to youths up to 24 years old. The judges were particularly impressed by FI's Child-Safe Network, a child protection programme involving grassroots community members, the tourism industry, and travellers. The programme provides advice about how best to behave with children, hotlines for emergency action, and training for local community members on child protection and what to do to protect a child at risk. Their regional campaign, "seven tips", has been translated into more than five languages advising on how to behave with children; on the detrimental effects of giving money to children or buying things from them; and on the scams all too often hidden behind orphanage and school visits, which have become a tourism commodity.

### Highly Commended: Intrepid Travel<sup>21</sup>

The judges recognise the contribution which Intrepid has made since the 1990s in addressing child protection. When Intrepid first began advocating child protection matters and sharing information with tourism partners, there was resistance from some businesses who believed that these issues were not of concern to them – that, for example, paedophiles would not book through their agency, use their airline, or stay in their hotel. Intrepid's response was to redouble its efforts, and hope that other companies would see the benefits that action on child protection would bring to their business and the communities where they operate. Leadership is vital if the industry is to face up to its responsibilities. Intrepid has been actively engaged in ensuring that in its recruitment processes and training, child protection is a priority. It also strongly supports charities and NGOs working to counter child abuse in the wide range of destinations in which it operates.

### BEST PHOTOGRAPHY FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Communicating Responsible Tourism is one of the purposes of the Awards. We have previously recognised writing which has communicated the difference which Responsible Tourism can make to local communities and their environment; and to enhancing the quality the travellers' and holiday makers' experience. This year we decided to look for examples of photographs, which communicate the idea of Responsible Tourism. We invited Michael Pritchard, Director-General of The Royal Photographic Society since 2011, to join the judging panel. An active photographer with a particular interest in landscape and travel photography, Michael kindly provided a selection of top tips for those wanting to submit their photographs. We were looking for pictures that communicated something about the Responsible Tourism approach.



^ Highly commended winners for Best Photography for Responsible tourism category -

Top left photo by Tanushree Singh

Right photo by Macy Anonuevo

Bottom left photo by Christopher Willan

We knew that to capture the idea of Responsible Tourism in a photograph was difficult, many of us have tried. Part of our purpose was to have a range of photographs which could be used to promote Responsible Tourism. We received 215 photographs and Michael shortlisted 10 for the judges to consider. There was a long debate about the merits of the shortlisted pictures which demonstrated convincingly that people see very different things in photographs, and in responsible tourism. We finally agreed on three which we wished to Highly Commend, none of which was thought by a substantial majority of the judges to communicate Responsible Tourism more than the others. There was therefore no overall winner. But there are three great Highly Commendeds.

### PEOPLE'S CHOICE FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

One of the purposes of the World Responsible Tourism Awards, perhaps our primary purpose, is to spread the idea of Responsible Tourism. We want to engage those involved in travel and tourism around the world, whether producers or consumers, to debate about what makes for a better kind of tourism. In the words of the Cape Town Declaration<sup>22</sup>, it is about "making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit".

This year, a panel of judges selected five previous winners for the People's Choice category. We chose from amongst recent winners to ensure that the practices and achievements for which they were recognised were still current as we also sought to present the diversity of Responsible Tourism.

**Battlesteads<sup>23</sup>** is an English hotel, pub and restaurant which demonstrates the full-range of Responsible Tourism practices and delivers an enhanced guest experience. **3 Sisters Adventure Trekking<sup>24</sup>** train and employ women as high-altitude guides and porters, a break from tradition in the male-dominated Nepalese trekking industry. **Whale Watch Kaikoura<sup>25</sup>** in New Zealand, is a Maori-owned whale watching operator which has demonstrated the ability, at scale, to offer a very high quality whale watching experience from energy-efficient craft, which have a very low impact on the marine environment. They provide ground-breaking interpretation which enables passengers to understand what is happening underwater. In India, **Reality Tours & Travel<sup>26</sup>** uses tourism to raise awareness of the reality of slum life, good and bad, and to raise money from its business and its customers to assist the communities it works with.

### Winner: Huilo Huilo,<sup>27</sup> Chile

Huilo Huilo addresses all three pillars of sustainability. It works to conserve the forest and endangered species including the Patagonian Huemul and the Darwin Frog; it has worked with local people to ensure that those who used to make their living from logging and timber are now able to live off tourism and this biological reserve has been a catalyst to creating opportunities for local people to create their own businesses, fostering music and poetry workshops and the Ethno-Mapuche Route.

Huilo Huilo won the Best for Conservation of Wildlife and Habitats category in 2012, the same year that Reality Tours and Travel was the overall winner. This demonstrates that the People's Choice may well differ from that of the experts; that businesses which are not in significant UK outbound destinations can win; and that the People's Choice also recognises the prowess of the Responsible Tourism businesses in the use of social media in gathering support across the world: Huilo Huilo got twice as many votes as Reality Tours and Travel which also got twice as many votes as the next business.

#### Footnotes:

1. [www.responsibletravel.com/awards/winners/](http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards/winners/)
2. <http://rt7.org/awards>
3. This is a shorter version of the paper which will appear in Progress in Responsible Tourism Vol 3 (1) and which will be available on line at [www.haroldgoodwin.info/TRProgress.html](http://www.haroldgoodwin.info/TRProgress.html)
4. [www.icrtourism.org](http://www.icrtourism.org)
5. Best for the Local Economy
6. [www.namet.org/namern.html](http://www.namet.org/namern.html)
7. <http://reefci.com/>
8. [www.thegreatprojects.com/](http://www.thegreatprojects.com/)
9. [www.chepu.cl](http://www.chepu.cl)
10. [www.chumbelsland.com](http://www.chumbelsland.com)
11. [www.villageways.com](http://www.villageways.com)
- 11a. <http://villagewayspartnership.com/>
- 11b. <http://www.villagewayspartnership.com/downloads/Charter.pdf>
12. [www.basecampexplorer.com/](http://www.basecampexplorer.com/)

13. [www.travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk](http://www.travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk)
14. [www.snowcarbon.co.uk](http://www.snowcarbon.co.uk)
- 14a. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5OG8q79fo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5OG8q79fo)
15. [www.bonito-ms.com.br](http://www.bonito-ms.com.br)
16. [www.kaunertal.com](http://www.kaunertal.com)
17. <http://maranaboisho.com>
18. [www.thevalleys.co.uk](http://www.thevalleys.co.uk)
19. [www.tui.nl/sustainabletourism](http://www.tui.nl/sustainabletourism)
20. [www.friends-international.org](http://www.friends-international.org)
21. [www.intrepidtravel.com](http://www.intrepidtravel.com)
22. <http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/CapeTown.html>
23. [www.battlesteads.com/](http://www.battlesteads.com/)
24. [www.3sistersadventure.com](http://www.3sistersadventure.com)
25. [www.whalewatch.co.nz](http://www.whalewatch.co.nz)
26. [www.realitytoursandtravel.com](http://www.realitytoursandtravel.com)
27. [www.huilohuilo.com](http://www.huilohuilo.com)
28. [www.tui.nl/sustainabletourism](http://www.tui.nl/sustainabletourism)

## OVERALL WINNER: TUI NEDERLAND

TUI Nederland<sup>28</sup> was chosen as the overall winner because of the scale of its achievement in child protection, an area of Responsible Tourism which many businesses are reluctant to address. The judges were impressed by TUI Nederland's willingness to campaign on the issue of child protection and its holistic approach. Increasing numbers of businesses are raising awareness amongst their staff and working with their suppliers to engage them in addressing all forms of child abuse. In 2011, TUI initiated, with the Ministry of Safety and Justice, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, the Dutch tourism association ANVR, and the NGOs ECPAT and Plan Nederland, a campaign at the three main Dutch airports to raise awareness about child protection issues.

The campaign was targeted at departing passengers to raise their awareness of the prevalence of child sex tourism in Brazil, and to encourage them to report incidents if they suspected that children were being sexually exploited. The judges were impressed by the willingness of TUI Nederland to raise the issue with their clients and Dutch travellers in general and to urge them to take action, to report their suspicions. The campaign was launched in October 2012 and in six months, five of the reports contained sufficient details for a full investigation whilst three are being followed up in The Netherlands and two abroad. In 2013 the campaign has continued with adverts in destination booklets and 40,000 campaign folders in brochures. That is leadership. The judges felt that this approach was highly replicable and that operators were too rarely willing to raise this sensitive issue with travellers and holidaymakers. They hope that others would emulate TUI Nederland's example.

This is an abridged version of the paper which will be published on the Awards in Progress in Responsible Tourism Volume 3 Issue 1. The journal is freely available; it is open access and published on-line. Publication will be announced in Responsible Tourism News – if you are not already a subscriber, subscribe at [www.responsibletourismpartnership.org/newsletterreg.html](http://www.responsibletourismpartnership.org/newsletterreg.html)

If you are reading this and thinking that you know of other, or better, potential winners for the Awards, please nominate them next year; only those which are nominated and commit time and effort to completing the required paper work, can be winners.

## To recognize child abuse abroad, common sense is your most powerful weapon. These are the things you should pay attention to:

- Children are minors if they haven't reached the age of 18
- Both boys and girls are being victimized
- The 'entertainment' is always sexually orientated
- Massaging and intimate touching is involved
- Men are most often perpetrators, but women can be as well
- Perpetrators can be off all age and appearance

## Not every situation is wrong, but if you see something that does not feel right, report this! Try to rely the following information in your report:

- Where (name of the hotel, bar)
- What (what has exactly happened)
- Who (do you know the identity of the perpetrator)
- When (date / time)
- To where (travel data, name en date of the flight, name of the carrier)

Initiatiefnemers van deze campagne: Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie,  
Koninklijke Marechaussee, ANVR, ECPAT, Plan Nederland

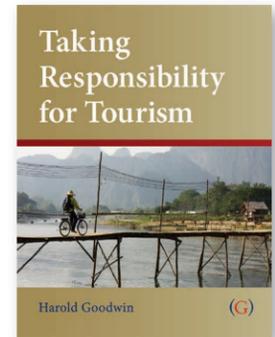
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## LINKS:

[www.haroldgoodwin.info](http://www.haroldgoodwin.info)  
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