

Atta launches sustainability charter at Experience Africa 2019

To reflect its commitment to improving tourism practises, the African Travel and Tourism Association (Atta) has launched its Atta Sustainability Charter at Experience Africa 2019. The charter, inspired by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, outlines ten principles specific to the African tourism context and encourages its members to endorse them and put them into practice.



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Atta is a member-driven trade association promoting tourism to Africa from all corners of the world. With over 600 members in 42 countries globally, Atta provides a platform which both promotes African tourism and connects businesses involved in the African tourism industry.

It was estimated in 2017 that 9.3 million jobs, 2.6% of all the employment in Africa, were generated by direct employment in the tourism industry. Many of these jobs are in rural areas where there are no alternative sources of employment. In addition to employment, tourism has a positive impact on economic, social and environmental sustainability and in many cases is a positive force for the conservation of wildlife.

Sustainability within tourism

Twenty-nineteen has seen a growing consciousness around issues of sustainability, climate change and concerns about the scarcity of resources, such as water, and pollution from plastics. Corporate social responsibility has become a mainstreamed concept in the business community.

Fiona Jeffery, OBE Chair Atta, explains: "Sustainability within tourism is an issue that's been on the agenda for over 25 years but only in the last 12 months has it started to become part of everyone's day to day language as the impact of climate change is better understood. Africa is one of the most likely impacted continents by climate change and some African tourism businesses lead the way in terms of their commitment to protecting the environment, wildlife, biodiversity and lifting communities out of poverty."

Furthermore, visitors are expressing more concern about sustainability issues in the destinations they are choosing and the services they are purchasing. The [ABTA Travel Trends report for 2019](#) found that 45% of holidaymakers say sustainability is an important element when booking a holiday, compared to 20% in 2011.

Fiona Jeffery OBE explains; "By establishing an Atta Sustainability Charter our aim is to unify our members with a template that outlines best practise principles giving members a recognised framework to work from and build off.

Championing sustainable practices

"The Atta Sustainability Charter also works within the internationally agreed global framework for tourism by following the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics and the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. The desire is to create greater member commitment and engagement and Atta will be building off the charter to provide tools and guidance for its members to become champions of sustainable tourism".

Atta had been committed to championing sustainable practices and Shelley Cox, the co-founder of Africa Conservation Travel, is the advisory board member on the issues of sustainability and conservation.

She adds: "To tackle the challenges surrounding sustainability, we believe it is more important than ever that an ethos of collaboration is fostered for greater impact. Through the Atta membership, we are aiming to provide a platform for specialists in the sustainability sector to advise our members, whilst also providing a platform for members to share ideas, experiences, successes and challenges on issues of sustainability.

"We in the African tourism landscape have a united responsibility to ensure our commitment to sustainable practices for the longevity of the landscape and wildlife in Africa, and we are excited at the prospect of being a vehicle to encourage, assist and provide support to ensure action and impact, whilst also providing awareness of the successes many of our members have already achieved in this realm."

The full charter can be found [here](#).

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