

# SUSTAINABILITY FACT SHEET

## INTRODUCTION

White Desert believes that responsible tourism is a genuine force for good. We support Sir David Attenborough's stance on the transformative power of wilderness travel, when he said,

*"No one will protect what they don't care about, and no one will care about what they have never experienced".*

The vast majority of our tourists return from Antarctica as ambassadors for the Continent's conservation. Furthermore, by using our aircraft to deliver scientists to their stations, we assist in vital, on-going climate change research.

## OUR PERMIT TO OPERATE

With almost 18 years of operational experience in Antarctica, we have an in depth understanding of what is truly required to preserve Antarctica's environmental equilibrium. No single country owns Antarctica, which is the only territory in the world to self-regulate via the Antarctic Treaty system and the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO). Our permit to operate is issued by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. It explicitly states that we may not have more than a 'minor or transitory' impact on the Antarctic environment and that we are subject to regular inspection to ensure all standards are maintained.

## EFFECTING CHANGE

We effect change in a number of ways:

### Carbon and Climate Change:

- We were the first Antarctic operator to offset all carbon emissions across our entire supply chain. This policy has been in place since 2007 using accredited reforestation projects in the Amazon and Indonesia and wind farms in Asia.
- In 2022/23 we are looking to take a more proactive approach to carbon offsetting and investigating investing in 'blue carbon'; seagrass meadow planting projects in the UK and South Africa.
- White Desert has established a carbon reporting baseline to enable not only carbon offsetting but to identify and set targets for the reduction of carbon. White Desert is one of the first UK organisations operating in Antarctica seeking to achieve science-based targets which are in line with the Paris Agreement and the UK Net Zero by 2050 goal. We seek continual environmental improvements in our operations using the best available technology.

### Aviation & Logistics:

White Desert takes a proactive stance when implementing sustainable solutions. We are pioneering new technologies and evolving rapidly.

- We only utilise modern aircraft with highly fuel-efficient engines.
- In 2021, we are the first operator to purchase Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) for use within Antarctica. A significant test quantity (40,000 litres) of SAF produced from agricultural methane will be trialled on continent in the 2022/23 season.



- Following the anticipated success, we will rapidly phase in the maximum allowed '50/50' blend of fuel across our whole supply chain, greatly reducing our carbon emissions footprint, as SAF can provide an 80% CO2 emissions reduction compared with conventional jet fuel.
- In addition to carbon reduction, SAF produces lower emissions of particulate matter, soot and oxides of sulphur. This produces fewer contrails, reducing the impact on local air quality. In addition, the reduction of soot is especially significant in Antarctica as its dark colour exacerbates the melting of snow and ice.
- We only partner with air operators who have signed up to the 'Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation' (Corsia) scheme, which uses market-based mechanisms to achieve tangible reductions in emissions.
- In an effort to reduce our fuel consumption, in 2022 we purchased six electric snow mobiles (skidoos) from Canadian operator, Taiga. These will be delivered in 2023 for trial use in the 2023/24 season.

### **Policy:**

We take pride in contributing to shaping areas of policy implementation. Working with a number of influential stakeholders in the Antarctic community, we look across multiple platforms to reduce impacts, self-regulate and safeguard the environmental legacy of Antarctica.

- Patrick Woodhead, our Founder and CEO, has been part of the UK government delegation at Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings on aviation matters, as well as Council of Management of National Antarctic Programmes (COMNAP).
- We employ a specialist Environmental Consultant who shapes internal policy, inspects and advises on all our logistics and systems, and is tasked with continuously reducing our environmental footprint.
- White Desert has a seat on the Sustainability Council of Virtuoso Travel Network, a grouping of over 20,000 travel advisors around the world.
- Robyn Woodhead, Co-Founder of White Desert, sat as the Chair of the Executive and Climate Change Committees of the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO) from May 2021 – May 2022.

### **Camps:**

From inception to implementation, we always have our environmental footprint in mind.

- All our luxury camps were designed to be built without foundations. They are temporary structures that can be dismantled without a trace, leaving no more than a minor or transitory impact on Antarctica.
- Both camps have photovoltaic solar panels for charging and we are working with a San Francisco-based solar air heater company for a next generation of heating solutions.
- Our waste management plan ensures that we minimise the waste arising in Antarctica, while all solid waste is removed from Antarctica at the end of each season for recycling or responsible disposal.
- Single use plastics have been eliminated across our supply chain and we use biodegradable plastics wherever possible.
- Only biodegradable soaps, shampoo and washing up liquids are used in camp.

### **AWARDS & ASSOCIATIONS**

White Desert has been recognised for our ongoing efforts to protect Antarctica and was commended at the 2017 Environmental Impact Awards for 'Team of the Year' and 'Project of the Year Award' for our published Initial Environmental Evaluation.

White Desert are also recognised by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office as being the Gold standard for the way we conduct our operations and how we report on them in our Initial Environmental Evaluations (IEE).

