

Helsinki Declaration

FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. COMMITTING TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

1.1 Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world. It employs 8.4 % of the world's workforce and accounts for 10.4 % of gross domestic product. In Finland, tourism employs over 60,000 people, and its share of the GDP is 2.4 %. In 2007, over 900 million trips abroad were taken worldwide, generating profits of 625 billion euros. The effects of tourism – both positive and negative – are enormous. Tourism is a prerequisite for many business activities and offers an opportunity for cooperation and spending time together, for relaxation and experiencing new things. Tourism increases tolerance and understanding between people and nations. On the other hand, tourism has a negative impact on the environment – for example, through carbon dioxide emissions and water pollution. It can also have a detrimental effect on local cultures and social structures.

1.2 As the representatives of the Finnish tourism industry, we believe that sustainable development is the guiding principle in our business and a prerequisite for the preservation of our livelihood. For the benefit of global wellbeing and our own industry, we strive to prevent, or minimise, the negative effects of tourism, and increase its positive effects.

1.3 We are committed to developing, practising and marketing tourism in a sustainable manner. We aim to decrease any harmful effects caused to the climate and the environment by tourism and travel. We also favour those forms of tourism and travel products, which take into consideration the carrying capacity of local nature and the cultural, social and economic environments, as well as the sustainability of operations.

2. PRINCIPLES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

2.1 We are committed to following local, national and international laws and regulations regarding our business.

2.2 We are actively against all forms of illegal, exploitative and abusive forms of tourism.

2.3 We always aim to take the best course of action in all our operations – both internally and when establishing

business relations with our partners, service providers and subcontractors – especially in regard to the following points:

- controlling climate change and improving energy efficiency
- responsible use of natural resources
- reducing waste and emissions
- the protection of biodiversity, endangered species and ecosystems
- the protection of landscapes, and cultural and natural heritage, respecting the integrity of local cultures and preventing damage to social structures
- cooperation with local organisations and people
- the use of local products and skills

2.4 We encourage our partners, service providers and subcontractors to improve their own role in the sustainable development of tourism. We work in cooperation with them and share our knowledge.

2.5 We aim to increase cooperation within the tourism industry and the public sector, local organisations and other interested operators in order to promote sustainable tourism.

2.6 These principles are included in our company policies. We specify our goals and follow our progress with the aim of continuous improvement.

3. GENERAL AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 We wish to disseminate information and raise interest amongst our clients and other interest groups on the environmental effects of tourism, and travel destinations' social, cultural and natural environments. We wish to promote mutual understanding and respect between our clients and the inhabitants at those destinations.

3.2 With our communications and marketing, we aim to promote behaviour and activities befitting the principles of sustainable tourism.

3.3 We encourage other representatives of the tourism industry to support this declaration and develop their own programme of sustainable development.

Statistical sources: WTTC 2008, UNWTO 2007, Statistics Finland Tourism Account 2006