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**Announcing the 2005 winners**



**First Choice**  
**Responsible Tourism**  
**Awards 2005**

 **Sponsored by**  
**First Choice**  
**Holidays PLC**

**In association with:**  
[responsibletravel.com](http://responsibletravel.com)  
The Times  
World Travel Market  
Geographical Magazine



# About

## Responsible Tourism

Responsible tourism provides more enjoyable and authentic holiday experiences that maximise the benefits of tourism to destinations and local people, whilst minimising any negative social or environmental impacts of tourism. I believe that this year has been a watershed as responsible tourism is being adopted by the wider tourism industry. The standard of entries to the Awards is higher than last year and demonstrates the advances being made by those at the forefront of responsible tourism.

*Dr. Harold Goodwin, Director International Centre for Responsible Tourism, University of Greenwich. Chair of the Judges.*

## The 2005 First Choice Responsible Tourism Awards

The Awards are a collaboration between on-line travel agent [responsibletavel.com](http://responsibletavel.com) who organise the Awards; UK media partners The Times and Geographical Magazine; and The World Travel Market who host the presentation event. The Awards are different from other tourism Awards in that winners are nominated by tourists. In 2005 we had over 700 nominations from readers of The Times, [responsibletavel.com](http://responsibletavel.com) and Geographical Magazine. A shortlist of potential winners is then put forward to a panel of 12 experts judges who review detailed responsible tourism questionnaires submitted by those short-listed, and take up references.

The central tenet of the Awards is that all types of tourism – from niche to mainstream – can and should be operated in a way that respects and benefits destinations and local people.

For more information visit  
[www.responsibletavel.com/awards](http://www.responsibletavel.com/awards) or call 01273 600052.



## First Choice Holidays PLC

First Choice Holidays PLC is delighted to have been the headline sponsor for the Responsible Tourism Awards this year. By sponsoring these awards we aim to highlight the good work that is going on across the industry. We take our own responsibilities seriously as a Company. Three years ago we agreed a vision: to enable people to explore and enjoy the world without harming it, based on a commitment to sustainable development. We have explained how we are working towards this goal in our recent Environment and People Report ([fcenvironmentandpeople.com](http://fcenvironmentandpeople.com)). We have been particularly impressed by the high calibre of the entries in all categories and we warmly congratulate the winners. Meeting the challenge of responsible tourism is not always easy and these companies and individuals are an inspiring example of what can be achieved.

## The Ambition of the Awards

The First Choice Responsible Tourism Awards are designed to inspire tourists and the tourism industry by what it is possible for passionate people and committed organisations in the tourism industry to achieve in recognising the wider responsibilities of our industry, and in improving and sustaining destinations for the benefit of local people, tourists, and the tourism industry.





## Congratulations to Tribes Travel

### About Tribes Travel

Tribes, the Fair Trade Travel company based in the UK, arranges quality tailor made and small group holidays in 14 countries. The company is run on ethical and responsible principles, and promotes local community tourism initiatives.

[www.tribes.co.uk](http://www.tribes.co.uk)

### Why Tribes won

- Tribes was one of the first tour operators (if not the first in the UK) set up specifically to promote holidays which benefit local people, wildlife and environment – particularly community tourism (tourism ventures owned by the local community or designed to benefit the community as a whole). They continue to be at the forefront of this market.
- Tribes has had a significant impact on the UK tourism market, since they have shown that it really IS possible to make a valid and successful business in tourism whilst promoting local products. This has certainly encouraged others to start companies on similar lines and expanded the market for tourism products which benefit local people.
- It has always been Tribes view that if you get the local people directly involved in tourism in a way which allows self-determination and pride, the issues of the environment and conservation are partly dealt with due to the understanding of the people as to their worth.

### Benefiting local people

- Providing a 'Travelling with Respect' leaflet for clients
- Keeping group sizes small (up to 8 usually)
- Giving clients additional information about the people they may meet and the kind of lives they lead
- Promoting community tourism initiatives. These projects bolster people's pride in their culture and bring income to communities
- Not selling services which are detrimental to local people or the environment (e.g. lodges which treat staff badly)

- Donating funds to 'The Tribes Foundation', a charity set up to support poor local communities affected by tourism
- Buying locally, and if there is a community initiative in an area Tribes will use it if it is up to standard
- Providing advice to community initiatives to bring them up to standard if required
- With Twin Trading Tribes have set up two tourism projects to specifically increase the income of coffee growers in Kilimanjaro and Peru.

### Leveraging change with partners and suppliers

- Tribes measure how clients perceive their responsibility through client feedback forms, which are all logged, and anything needing action is dealt with promptly
- Tribes asks suppliers to complete a questionnaire about their working practices before deciding to work with them. This allows them to pick up on any ways of working which are not responsible and give suggestions as to how to change this. Simply by asking the right questions Tribes are able to make suppliers think about their practices in areas they may not have otherwise considered
- Tribes use client feedback to suggest changes to suppliers if they find that something is not done in a responsible way.





## Winner Tribes Travel



[www.tribes.co.uk](http://www.tribes.co.uk)

Tribes, the Fair Trade Travel company based in the UK, arranges quality tailor made and small group holidays in 14 countries. Tribes has had a significant impact on the UK tourism market by proving that it is possible to make a valid and successful business in tourism whilst promoting local community tourism products.

## Highly commended

**Explore Worldwide**  
[www.exploreworldwide.com](http://www.exploreworldwide.com)

Explore are a small group adventure tour operator founded in 1981. Among many other initiatives Explore are replacing UK based tour leaders with local tour leaders. This was completed on 12 existing products in 2005; the entire Egypt programme; and 1/3 of new product for 2006.

**Meet the People Tours**  
**(Traidcraft & Skeddadle)**  
[www.traidcraft.co.uk](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk)

Meet the People Tours is a range of tours operated, managed and developed on behalf of Traidcraft by Saddle Skeddadle Ltd. These tours support Traidcraft's wider work fighting poverty through trade.

## Winner Nihiwatu Resort



[www.nihiwatu.com](http://www.nihiwatu.com)

Nihiwatu is an upmarket resort in Indonesia dedicated to reducing poverty on the island of Sumba. Since 2001 guests have donated over US\$450k to projects through The Sumba Foundation (established by the resort). To date they have provided 22 water stations that produce clean water to 4,500 villagers. They have 7 clinics in a 45 sq km area providing good healthcare to 10,000 people; and support 4 primary schools and 1,200 students with a full range of school supplies at the start of each semester - 2 of the schools have been completely rebuilt by their team.

**Sponsored by Active Hotels** [www.activehotels.com](http://www.activehotels.com)

As one of Europe's leading online hotel booking websites we encourage guests to provide feedback about their hotel experience which we publish on our site. If the guest reviews highlight an environmental concern then we ensure that the issues are brought to the attention of the hotelier. The awards are an excellent initiative and our company is committed to encouraging all hotels to be as environmentally-friendly as possible.

## Highly commended

**Bird Island**  
[www.birdislandseychelles.com](http://www.birdislandseychelles.com)

Bird Island in the Seychelles operates a 24 chalet hotel and employs 35 staff who act as guardians to the island's fauna and flora, and its surrounding reefs. The population of Sooty Terns on the Island has recovered from 18,000 pairs in 1967 to over 1m pairs under the stewardship of its enlightened owners.

**The Boat Landing Guest House**  
[www.theboatlanding.laopdr.com](http://www.theboatlanding.laopdr.com)

The Boat Landing Guest House is located in north-western Laos. 5 years ago no one in the villages had any experience of tourism. Today all the staff come from nearby villages the farthest being 2 km away. The Guest House is now the largest private employer in the area.



Best hotel / accommodation



**Sponsored by Intrepid Travel** [www.intrepidtravel.com](http://www.intrepidtravel.com)

Intrepid believe that the Awards give voice to great achievements in responsible tourism that may otherwise go unnoticed on the world stage. Intrepid Travel believe strongly that tour operators have the capability and responsibility to make positive impacts wherever they travel and are proud to applaud the inspirational work by nominees in the Best Tour Operator category.





# Winner

## Sustrans



Photograph courtesy of Julian Crau / Sustrans

[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity whose vision is a future in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. Sustrans flagship project, the National Cycle Network, reached 10,000 miles in September 2005. One third is traffic-free, the rest is on quiet lanes and traffic-calmed roads. Over 201 million journeys were made on the Network in 2004 which allows people to travel in a way that doesn't add to current pollution levels. In 2004 just over 50 million trips on the Network replaced a car trip.

**Sponsored by: Rough Guides [www.roughguides.com](http://www.roughguides.com)**

Rough Guides believes that the future of the global travel and tourism industry depends on low-impact transport policies being adopted worldwide. As a publisher that encourages our readers to travel widely, we are seeking ways in which we can lend support to modes of transport and mass transit initiatives that reduce the overall reliance on carbon-emitting vehicles. We are very happy to be able to support the First Choice Responsible Tourism Award 2005 for the Best Mode of Transport or Transport Initiative.

Best mode of transport  
or transport initiative



## Highly commended

**The National Trust  
Greenway Garden  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)**

Greenway is a glorious, 30 acre, woodland garden on the banks of the river Dart in South Devon. 50% of Greenway visitors arrive by green transport. Local fears of traffic congestion were with some foundation. Greenway developed a traffic management plan to mitigate increased vehicle access to the property. They also promote visit by foot – opening footpaths and bridleways on the estate to enable visitors to walk from Torbay and Kingswear – and by cycle, providing cycle racks, and midi-coach. 9.00am and 5.00pm are chaotic times so Greenway arranged opening times to avoid these peaks.

# Winner

## Guerba



[www.guerba.co.uk](http://www.guerba.co.uk)

Guerba operates small group trekking, overland, adventure and discovery tours around the world and aim to show you the world 'in close-up'. Guerba worked with their Nepal operator to pioneer the use of kerosene stoves on Himalayan treks to avoid competing with locals for wood and deforesting the areas.

Guerba have raised over £50k to purchase land for the Amani Children's Home ([www.amanikids.org](http://www.amanikids.org)) in Moshi, Tanzania for the orphans and street-children at the base of Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Rather than the tiny 2 bedroom rented bungalow that currently houses 72 kids, the new home will house over 100 children in safe and comfortable surroundings with proper washing facilities, dining room and classrooms.

## Highly commended

**Neilson  
[www.neilson.co.uk](http://www.neilson.co.uk)**

Neilson offers sailing, skiing, mountain biking, windsurfing, diving, and "beachclub" holidays. In 2004 Neilson asked Ski suppliers to complete a sustainability questionnaire for a Responsible Tourism Award. Those scoring 65% or over receive a letter and certificate, and are identified in the ski brochure.

**Black Sheep Inn  
[www.blacksheepinn.com](http://www.blacksheepinn.com)**

Black Sheep Inn is small eco-lodge (10 rooms) and permaculture demonstration site (10 acres) in the rural Ecuadorian Andes. Before 1994, Chugchilan was unknown by tourists, travellers, and agencies. Now Chugchilan has preserved its cultural charm and has several community businesses that profit from sustainable tourism including: horseback riding tours, women's knitting cooperative, 2 locally owned hostels, native guides, transportation cooperative, and a public library/computer centre.



Best in a mountain environment



## Winner

**The Venus Company**



[www.venuscompany.co.uk](http://www.venuscompany.co.uk)

The Venus company aim to provide the best al fresco Mediterranean style dining experience in a UK beach setting whilst integrating environmental and social care into every business decision. Venus is especially proud of its packaging achievements using environmentally friendly cardboard products – elemental chlorine free bags, plates, wooden cutlery and cups.

Venus uses paper straws which biodegrade in a few weeks, rather than hundreds of years for the cheaper plastic straws, and has never used polystyrene.

Paper bags have slogans, "Something else to chew over! – cardboard packaging delivered to us is either re-used or recycled to make healthy bedding for local horses and donkeys".

## Highly commended

**Ionian Eco Villagers**  
[www.relaxing-holidays.com](http://www.relaxing-holidays.com)

Ionian Eco Villagers is a green tour operator, based at Gerakas (Greece), located in the National Marine Park of Zakynthos, set up to protect the Loggerhead Sea Turtles. In 1991 Yannis, a local Zakynthian, became a conservationist and moved his bar off the beach. He then ensured that no other buildings could be built near the beach by working with his family and other local people.

Now, according to the Presidential Decree all building built on/behind nesting beaches in NMPZ areas are illegal. In 2000 he formally set up an English non-for-profit organisation called Earth Sea & Sky through which to coordinate his conservation work.

## Winner

**Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism (ASSET)**



[www.asset-gambia.com](http://www.asset-gambia.com)

ASSET assists over 70 small tourism businesses (2500 people) to increase the income of poor Gambians by helping groups and individuals to become formal organisations and enhancing, diversifying and better presenting members' products, thereby maximising incomes. Prior to its capacity building work the so-called 'formal sector' (e.g. large scale hotels) did not include small-scale businesses in their activities and ASSET members (tourist taxis, fruit sellers, juice pressers, craft market vendors, official tourist guides vied with each other for a tiny share of a small market.

**Sponsored by: Exodus** [www.exodus.co.uk](http://www.exodus.co.uk)

Exodus supports the Poverty Alleviation award because of the vital importance that we believe tourism plays in development especially empowerment at a local level to find a sustainable and brighter future. These awards showcase the excellent work being carried out globally and we believe help to inspire others to see the importance of sustainable and responsible tourism.

## Highly commended

**Koiyaki Guiding School & Wilderness Camp**  
[www.rekero.com/koiyaki](http://www.rekero.com/koiyaki)

Koiyaki Guiding School is the first training facility in Africa for young Maasai secondary school leavers as tourism guides for the Masai Mara eco-system.

These secondary school leavers undertake a one year field internship course in wildlife management, ecology, photography, communication and educational skills, camp and cuisine management, cultural interpretation and mechanics.

**Tourism in Ethiopia for Sustainable Future Alternatives (TESFA)**  
[www.community-tourism-ethiopia.com](http://www.community-tourism-ethiopia.com)

TESFA is a local NGO committed to developing community-run tourism Enterprises in Ethiopia that are environmentally, culturally and economically sustainable. TESFA has given local communities an alternative source of income in an area in which highland farmers suffer chronic poverty as traditional agriculture alone can no longer support them.





# Winner

**Basecamp Masai Mara**



[www.basecampexplorer.com/masaimara](http://www.basecampexplorer.com/masaimara)

Basecamp Masai Mara, Kenya, sets out to conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable use of the environment and the nature upon which we depend. Their Maasai 'arts & crafts' project empowers disadvantaged local Maasai women to sell traditional crafts along fair trade agreement principles, ensuring the women receive 75% of the sale price. The project counteracts the fast increasing "financial prostitution" amongst Maasai women who sell poor quality products on behalf of men.

**Sponsored by: Airport Parking & Hotels Ltd. [www.aph.com](http://www.aph.com)**

We believe we have a duty to be responsible environmentally and have joined forces with the World Land Trust. So far this year we have raised over £10,000 and purchased the equivalent amount of acres of Belize rainforest to match the APH car parking acreage in the UK and carbon balanced the companies operation, again through the World Land Trust.

# Highly commended

**South Hams District Council for Life into Landscape**  
[www.lifeintolandscape.org.uk](http://www.lifeintolandscape.org.uk)

Life into Landscape is a partnership of organisations led by the council that aims to conserve and enhance the features that make the South Devon area so special. Their success include 50 historic green lanes restored; 25 recreational walking and riding routes enhanced; 15 km hedgerow restored; 40 traditional orchards conserved; 70 wildlife sites enhanced.

**The Lake District Tourism and Conservation Partnership**  
[www.lakespartnership.org.uk](http://www.lakespartnership.org.uk)

The Tourism and Conservation Partnership (TCP) works with tourism businesses within Cumbria to encourage fundraising for conservation projects. Visitors to Cumbria have the opportunity to make a voluntary donation to an individual conservation project. To date over £800,000 has been raised by TCP business member's and their customers.

# Winner

**Discovery Initiatives**



Photograph courtesy of Vivek Sharma

[www.discoveryinitiatives.co.uk](http://www.discoveryinitiatives.co.uk)

Discovery Initiatives are a responsible nature travel operator actively using ecotourism to fund and support conservation - worldwide. They work in partnership with International and local wildlife agencies to offer travel programmes that support, educate, and fund wildlife conservation and local community enterprises. In 8 years they have pioneered this approach in 35 countries and have worked with 27 separate organisations and projects, and contributed nearly £600,000 to wildlife conservation organisations.

**Sponsored by: Peregrine Adventures [www.peregrineadventures.com](http://www.peregrineadventures.com)**

Peregrine believe that it is through initiatives like the Awards that consumers are made more aware of sustainable tourism, and will make this a major consideration when booking a holiday. By supporting the awards we can help raise the profile of such crucial issues and in doing so convince other operators of the pressing need to adopt a code of responsible tourism.

# Highly commended

**The Snow Leopard Conservancy & Himalayan Homestays (HH)**  
[www.snowleopardconservancy.org](http://www.snowleopardconservancy.org)

The Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC) promotes community-based stewardship of snow leopards and their habitat.

SLC's tourism initiatives, including Himalayan Homestays, link conservation with local livelihoods. HH revenue per household now ranges from US \$30 to US \$100 (cf. average annual income US \$400) and the number of Himalayan Homestays has increased from 8 to more than 60 in 12+ sites.



Best for conservation  
of endangered species



Best in a protected area



# Winner

Whitepod



[www.whitepod.com](http://www.whitepod.com)

Whitepod provides an alternative means to explore the Swiss Alps. With the use of the pods (dome shaped tents), pitched on raised wooden platforms, Whitepod offers low impact accommodation in a pristine, positively inspiring environment. Within this environment, they seek to promote and encourage responsible tourism.

Whitepod was designed to provide a sustainable and viable alternative to mass tourism in the Alps, especially in the winter when the considerable increase in the demand for skiing holidays results in an alarming recourse to artificial snow and the planning of additional ski runs.

Produce is purchased locally, often directly from the producers; the cheeses are made by local farmers, the fish is supplied from the local lakes by small independent fishermen, and the game meat is local and purchased directly from the local butcher.

# Winner

Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)



[www.cat.org.uk](http://www.cat.org.uk)

The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) is a visitor attraction in Snowdonia (Wales) aiming to 'inspire, inform, and enable' people to live more sustainably. A solutions driven organisation, offering practical solutions to environmental problems, CAT's key areas of work are renewable energy, environmental building, energy efficiency and organic growing.

The centre is completely self sufficient in energy, water and sewage treatment using an array of environmentally friendly technologies, including wind turbines, hydro, solar power, wood and solar heating.

CAT's visitor centre is open 7 days a week demonstrating sustainable technologies and innovative solutions to environmental problems. Educational workshops on environmental issues and sustainability are also provided for school groups and visiting children.

# Highly commended

3 Rivers Ecolodge, Dominica  
[www.3riversdominica.com](http://www.3riversdominica.com)

3 Rivers is a small eco lodge and sustainable living centre where they teach monthly workshops for Dominicans and tourists in all forms of renewable sustainable living, as well as training future teachers, and offer free tours of all their systems to visitors, including all schools in Dominica.

Greenwood Forest Park  
(Green Dragon rollercoaster)  
[www.greenwoodforestpark.co.uk](http://www.greenwoodforestpark.co.uk)

The Park opened in 1993 as an environmental education attraction about trees and forests, but now covers other sustainability issues and welcomes 100,000 visitors per year. In 2004 they built the world's first people powered roller coaster. Over a year's operation the Green Dragon coaster should be a net producer of electricity.

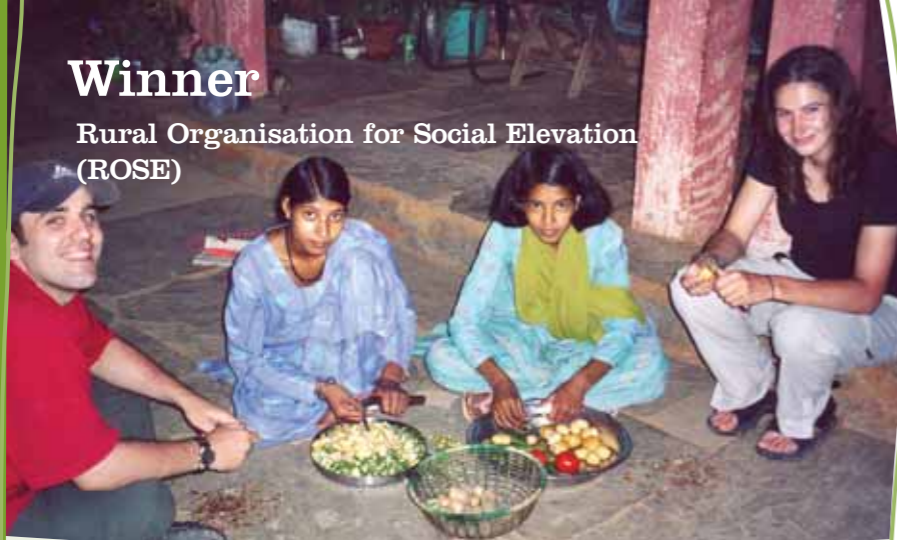




Best volunteering programme

# Winner

Rural Organisation for Social Elevation (ROSE)



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

ROSE is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation, working at the grass roots level in India. The goal of ROSE is to enhance the health, education, and quality of life for the rural poor by means of a volunteer-based tourism programme.

The primary function of ROSE is to create a space for visitors to learn about, and contribute to, the Kanda community. Visitors are screened through an application process, and maximum occupancy is 15 guests. ROSE frequently holds meetings with the community to ensure its approval and encourage its participation in projects.

Sponsored by: **The Imaginative Traveller** [www.imaginative-traveller.com](http://www.imaginative-traveller.com)

The Imaginative Traveller believe that by providing an acknowledgement of initiatives which ensure travel is overwhelmingly a positive experience for all – people, place and the environment – the standard is set consistently high. The Imaginative Traveller has recently launched 'Imaginative Volunteers' and would like to congratulate this year's winner of the Best Volunteering Programme, as well as thank them for their inspiration.

# Highly commended

**Azafady**  
[www.madagascar.co.uk](http://www.madagascar.co.uk)

Azafady is a UK registered charity working in partnership with a southern NGO in Madagascar. The partnership between the organisations has for ten years funded and implemented integrated conservation and development projects in Madagascar.

Volunteers are recruited worldwide and work with our local staff (the program employs 65 permanent Malagasy nationals) and the local population on activities and projects intended to improve health, reduce environmental degradation, and improve livelihood prospects for the poorest rural people.

# Winner

Jo Pope, Robin Pope Safaris  
South Luangwa, Zambia.



Photograph courtesy of Justin Francis

[www.robinpopesafaris.net](http://www.robinpopesafaris.net)

Jo and her husband, Robin, have always advocated the training up of Zambian staff members. Jo's staff are well-paid, well-treated and very well motivated – with an admirable company ethos that has engendered a lot of loyalty. Many guides and camp staff have been with the company for years, and each year the best members of staff are chosen from within the general staff of the camp to be trained up as guides. Jo has for many years supported the local schools and clinics in her area.

Last year about \$100,000 was donated to local schools in the form of \$20,000 direct to students for their schooling, \$15,000 for teachers salaries at 2 schools to supplement the government staff, and \$65,000 for building and development of two schools in the form of new classrooms and equipment. Next year she's looking at helping the community to start a secondary school – which will be the first in the Mfuwe area. Secondly, she backed and helped the villagers of Kawaza village to set up and run their own viable village tourism.

Sponsored by: **Expert Africa, formerly Sunvil Africa** [www.expertafrica.com](http://www.expertafrica.com)

We chose to support these awards because we believe that excellence needs to be trumpeted, and to raise these issues still further. Travelling more responsibly needs to be the future for the whole industry. These winners are making that a reality today; they deserve recognition.



Outstanding personal contribution

**EXPERT AFRICA**  
Formerly Sunvil Africa.



# Thank you

## ...to all the Judges

- Harold Goodwin** | Chair | Director, International Centre for Responsible Tourism at the University of Greenwich
- Cath Urquhart** | Travel Editor | The Times
- Fiona Jeffery** | Group Exhibition Director of The World Travel Market
- Nick Smith** | Editor | Geographical Magazine - the magazine of the Royal Geographical Society
- Tricia Barnet** | Director of Tourism Concern
- Sue Hurdle** | Director of The Travel Foundation
- Jane Ashton** | Head of CSR First Choice Holidays PLC
- Debbie Hindle** | Managing Director of BGB & Associates
- Frances Tuke** | PR Manager of ABTA (Association of British Travel Agents)
- Ian Reynolds** | formerly of ABTA
- Richard Hammond** | Guardian Columnist and media consultant
- Justin Francis** | Managing Director | responsibletravel.com

## responsibletravel.com would also like to thank:

### Our partners

- The Times
- World Travel Market
- Geographical

### Headline sponsor



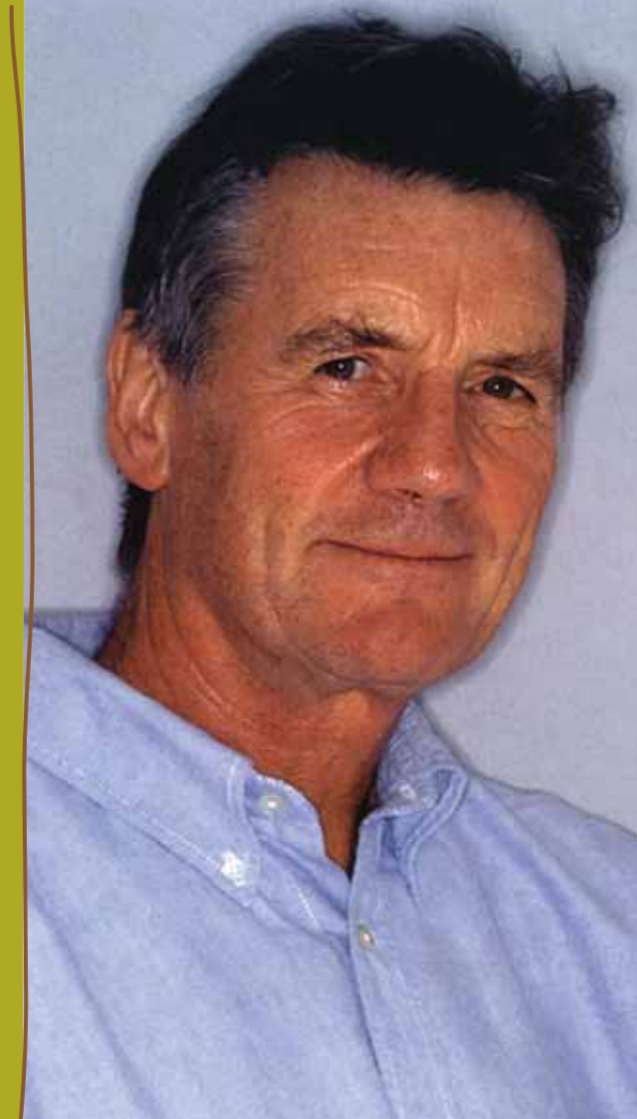
### Category sponsors



## A special message from Michael Palin

I've been fortunate enough to visit 80 countries since I started my TV globetrotting in 1988. On my travels I'm mostly off the beaten track and make a point of meeting local people and using local guides who've always extended the warmest of welcomes - at least I think that's what they were doing, but some might have been more bemused than anything else! I've seen how responsible forms of tourism can give local people and conservation a much-needed helping hand.

If you've had a holiday which you felt benefited local people and minimised environmental impacts, then it's time to celebrate these efforts.



photograph courtesy John Swannell

