

GUIDELINE FOR RESPONSIBLE FAM TRIPS



In the frame of the joint project “Sustainable information and press trips” by Futouris and Turespaña.

Imprint

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Preamble

Familiarisation trips, referred to as fam trips are an important element for tour operators to promote their destination, hotels, and activities. For the participants, often agents or journalists, it is an opportunity to get to know a destination by experiencing it first-hand.

Sustainability issues have so far not been at the core of the planning process of Fam trips, which yields an opportunity for improvement. Flights are mostly chosen even within destinations, to reach different areas as fast as possible. The trips are commonly designed in a rather shallow way, with little exposure to local communities and their culture. There are many reasons as to why it is worth making Fam trips more sustainable.

Travelling responsibly should be the norm. Designing fam trips to be more sustainable is a chance for tour operators and the destination to set a status quo of travelling and improve their impact. More importantly, it is the responsibility of the tour operators and the destination to actively encourage responsible travel throughout the value chain. Therefore, responsible travel does not only concern the tourists or end-consumers, but anyone who is involved in the product design process. As an important part of the tourism business, Fam trips serve as the first impression of a destination. This impression and the way to travel – more or less sustainable and caring for environment and culture - will later be transmitted to the end consumer.

Fam trips are an occasion of learning and experiencing. This chance should be used to talk about challenges that the destination or its actors face, as well as the opportunities and efforts taken to move towards being a destination of responsible travel. This helps understand and eventually authentically promote the destination to the end consumers. What is more, redesigning the fam trip can enhance the experience for the participants and anyone involved – leading to higher satisfaction and loyalty.

Redesigning the way fam trips are organised is an important step towards a more sustainable approach of tourism!

Turespaña is committed to continuously improve and become a responsible tourism destination. The following document was designed for Turespaña and serves as a guideline to support the development of responsible Fam trips. It includes concrete ideas to be considered to meet sustainability aspects in tourism. The checklist is a suitable tool to ensure as many criteria as possible are met.

The fam trip can be divided into four main phases along the customer journey: Invitation, Outward trip, Programme and Post trip. The chapters of the guidelines are divided into the main phases of the fam trip. Every chapter focusses on one of the phases, providing detailed insight into important elements to be considered to develop a responsible fam trip.

FAM TRIP OVERVIEW

A trip summary with elements of improvements and relevant measures for a more sustainable approach to Fam trips.



Planning/ invitation phase

The first interaction between the tour operator and participant of the fam Trip is a crucial moment. The way the participant is approached, how the destination is depicted and the way the hosting tour operator presents itself: all these factors shape the first impression the participant has of the trip, the destination, and the organisation. The first interaction provides an opportunity to influence this first notion, expectations and the travel behaviour of the participants invited.

Communication and promotion of fam trip

Check if applicable

Information provided on the destination includes aspects of economic, ecological, and social sustainability.

☐

The organising party informs about current economic, social, and environmental situation and efforts taken such as projects focussing on sustainability.

The information provided not only promotes the beauties, but also tackles challenges that the destination is facing.

☐

The organising party raises awareness on problems and challenges such as water usage and water scarcity, waste management, corruption, etc. also focussing on social topics and giving local communities a voice.

Information on political and economic situation as well as history are provided.

☐

Highlighting current economic situation, political system, current topics discussed in politics and important historical events.

The choice of hotels to be visited is depicted and represented in a true light ☐

- Including information on their efforts to a responsible management
- Including type of accommodation, ownership etc.

The organising party provides insights into the hotels' efforts for responsible management such as water and electricity usage, their efforts to reduce food-waste, working conditions and their commitment to promote responsible behaviour to their guests.

Futouris (future) *Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Communication* are applied in the own communication. And participants were actively motivated to implement it in their reporting. ☐

Comprehensive consideration of the topic of sustainability; clear, understandable and consistent communication

Pictures and information used are from real experiences and convey an authentic image of the destination. ☐

Pictures taken from travel programmes and experiences offered by the organising party.

If pictures of people are used for promotion, they have given their consent to using the pictures. ☐

All content is culture-, gender-, and diversity sensitive. ☐

Inclusive language is used to avoid biases, slang or expressions that discriminate against groups of people based on cultural background, gender, or socioeconomic status.

Information about the organising party is provided to the participants, including contact details. ☐

Information on the organisation, its business, structure, and efforts taken for a more sustainable form of tourism.

More information on the destination can be provided upon request. ☐

The organising party can be contacted if further information is requested or if there are open questions.

Information on the itinerary of the trip is provided ☐

- Including tips how to contribute to a more responsible way of tourism as a traveller
- Including information on impact
- Including planned activities
- Including packing list

Information on safety, security and COVID are provided. ☐

Hygiene protocols, health- and safety regulations, measures taken to provide a safe environment to the travellers are actively communicated to the participants.

Level of accessibility is clearly stated. ☐

Level of accessibility of accommodations and degree of physical capability required for activities, as well as services that can be offered for people with special needs.

Other

Check if applicable

Participants are asked for dietary preferences/allergies etc. Suitable options are provided throughout the trip. ☐

Information on dietary preferences such as a meat-free or plant-based diet and allergies are recorded and respected in providing food and beverages to the participants.

Further readings / sources:

Sustainable communication: [Guidelines for sustainable tourism communication](#)

Information on inclusive language: [Guidelines gender-inclusive language](#)

Outward trip

For the participant, the trip starts when they embark on their journey. Since it is a business trip for them, they expect everything to go smoothly and as convenient as possible, considering that the participants are confronted with a lot of information within a short period of time. Within this phase, many elements can be adapted to minimise the negative impact of the journey. When it comes to transportation in general, standards are ground-based, and more climate-friendly means of transportation, especially public transportation such as trains and buses. Using airplanes should not be the norm but the exception.

Journey to destination country

Check if applicable

If covered by organising party: ☐

Ground-based, and more climate-friendly means of transportation are used for travelling to the destination country, if possible.

Such as public busses or trains.

If covered by participants: ☐

If flights are inevitable, CO₂ compensation of flights to the destination country are covered by the organising party. Ground-based, more climate-friendly means of transportation are encouraged.

Options for transportation such as public busses or trains to the destination country other than flights are provided

Options for CO₂ compensation are provided. ☐

The organising party provides a list of possible providers of carbon offsetting including the costs for the respective flights as well as the reasons for the importance to offset one's carbon emissions.

Arrival and transportation within destination country

Check if applicable

If the visiting parties arrive at separate times, a collective pick-up is organised. ☐

Welcome (or other) gifts are from local production, made for multiples uses and do not involve single-package goods. ☐

The organising party avoids offering welcome (or other) gifts which are designed single use and/or are made of harmful materials such as (single-use) plastic, and/or wrapped in single-use packaging.

Welcome (or other) gifts do not reinforce stereotypes and clichés, but represent authentic handicraft, art, or agricultural products of the destination country. ☐

Items are produced locally, producer supports and empowers local communities.

Other

Check if applicable

Possibility to extend the trip is offered. ☐

The organising party advocates and informs about the benefits of trip extensions.

Further readings / sources:

Compensation

- atmosfair: <https://www.atmosfair.de/en/offset/flight/>
- Myclimate: <https://www.myclimate.org>

Impact calculation: <https://www.cstt.nl/carmacal> (paid)

- For hotels
 - <https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/resource/hotel-carbon-measurement-initiative/>
 - <https://www.unwto.org/hotel-energy-solution>

Programme

Fam trips are often used to get to know the destination whereby the hotels are often in the focus. To truly understand a destination, it is crucial to also tap into what the local communities have to offer and what role they play in the tourism industry of this destination. Therefore, the active interaction with local communities should also be encouraged during Fam trips, to foster a deeper understanding of the challenges that local people face, what their needs are and how they contribute to successful tourism. When it comes to the partners and suppliers, such as hotels, their efforts towards a responsible form of tourism should be actively discussed.

Only when the Fam-guests get to experience what the destination truly has to offer, and understand the challenges that exist, they can tell the story of the destination.

Activities	Check if applicable
The hotels' efforts towards responsible behaviour are a topic of presentation and discussion. <i>Discussions about the challenges the hotels face and how they approach them, including how they promote responsible behaviour to their guests.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities do respect and preserve nature, environment, and culture. <i>The activities raise awareness of the biodiversity, wildlife, and cultural aspects such as traditions, religion, and customs.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protected areas are respected. <i>Activities do not harm protected areas such as national parks, wilderness areas, community conserved areas, natural reserves and so on. Local rules and regulations on protected areas are respected.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities with a focus on sustainability are included. <i>Provide the opportunity to get to know local customs and traditions, focus on economic or ecological sustainability.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No activities that involve wildlife to be acquired, bred, or held captive are provided. <i>Further details on "Animal welfare in tourism" can be found in ABTA's Global Welfare Guideline.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exchange with local community is encouraged, to give a local perspective of tourism in the destination. <i>By visiting local markets, establishing dialogues with locals, and engaging in activities with them, visiting social initiatives.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Programme allows enough recreation time/ time for participants to write/work. ☐

The person accompanying the group is trained on First Aid. ☐

Responsible behaviour

Check if applicable

No use of single-portion packaging. ☐

The organising party ensures that all products and materials provided are not designed for single use or/and packaged in single-use materials.

Use of reusable water bottles is encouraged. ☐

By providing reusable water bottles to participants, as well as highlighting the benefits of using reusable water bottles. The organising party needs to ensure that the participants can refill their bottles before and during the activities.

The participants are actively informed about waste management such as food waste or water usage and are encouraged to act responsibly. ☐

Inform about the requirements of the national / local waste management system and ask participants to save water or other natural resources (energy, food) and to support the regional waste management system by avoiding waste and separating unavoidable waste as required.

The impact of the trips offered are actively discussed. ☐

Impact on local communities, environmental impact regarding transportation, waste generation, water, and electricity usage.

The organising party actively discusses their efforts in encouraging tourists, suppliers, and partners to act more responsibly. ☐

The organising party actively communicates their role in promoting responsible tourism, the role of the tourists and the role of the participants. ☐

Discuss the importance of promoting responsible tourism, giving concrete examples how tourists and participants can contribute to a more sustainable approach of tourism.

Partners and Suppliers

Check if applicable

Local businesses are chosen and promoted. ☐

Businesses that support and empower local communities are preferred. ☐

Businesses committed to sustainable management are preferred. ☐

Businesses holding sustainability certification or partners with a sustainable approach

Elements of a sustainable approach could include:

- *Responsible waste, water, or electricity management for example usage of renewable energy or avoidance of Air-condition*
- *Barrier-free facilities such as wheel-chair accessible facilities, availability of services for persons with special needs*
- *Regional job creation by employing locals*
- *Promotion and usage of local and organic produce*
- *Self-sufficient businesses*
- *Promotion of reuse by providing reusable water bottles, avoidance of single packaging etc.*

Transportation

Check if applicable

Ground-based and more climate-friendly means of transportation, especially public transportation such as trains and buses are used to travel between destinations within the country. ☐

If flights are inevitable, CO₂ compensation of flights within the destination country are covered by the organising party. ☐

No off-road transportation / activities are provided. ☐

Local rules and regulation on protected areas are respected.

Responsible travelling does not only concern the tourist.

Return and Post Trip

Just as the outward trip, the journey back home yields many opportunities to implement responsible practices and encourage mindful behaviour. The phase after the trip has been finished provides the opportunity to stay in touch. This is perfect to supply further information or receive feedback from the guests. As a motivational gesture, they could even be reminded of their positive impact.

Transportation

Check if applicable

If transportation to the airport is needed, the transfer is done collectively. ☐

Staying in touch

Check if applicable

The participants are asked for feedback on the trip (to ensure continuous improvement). ☐

Every participant receives a survey after the trip, reflecting on the experience, addressing sustainability aspects and potential improvements. The feedback is analysed and considered for further programme design.

The guests are provided with a summary of their trip, with further information. ☐

The summary reflects on the trip and highlights the different experiences.

Incentive: the guests get an overview of their impact (environment, local benefit, ...) with the trip. (ex. Calculation of impact or overview of projects supported etc). ☐

A summary of environmental impact of the trip, including calculated footprint, an overview on impact on local communities and economies.

Even after the trip the organising party is available for further questions and queries. ☐

The organising party provides the option to stay in touch.

The organising party facilitates opportunities to support local initiatives, if possible. ☐

The organising party provides information on local initiatives and how they can be supported.