

Report of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators 2024-25

Under Article III (2) of the Antarctic Treaty

Introduction

The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) is pleased to report its activities to ATCM 47.

IAATO focuses on activities in support of its mission to advocate and promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private sector travel to Antarctica. Further information on IAATO, its mission, primary activities and recent developments can be found at:

www.iaato.org.

Overview

IAATO has been committed to promoting safe and environmentally responsible private sector travel over the last three decades. This commitment has been unwavering through periods of major industry growth, the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic and most recently, the emergence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Antarctica.

IAATO's strength has been, and continues to be, its membership's ability to draw upon their own experience and advice from stakeholders to address emerging challenges and evolve its procedures and management when necessary. IAATO's current membership totals 126 members, comprising 55 operators and provisional operators, and 70 associates.

The total number of visitors (Vessel and Deep Field) in the 2024-25 season was 118,491. As forecast in ATCM 46 (2024) IP102 *IAATO Overview of Antarctic Vessel Tourism: The 2023-24 Season, and Preliminary Estimates for 2024-25*, the 2024-25 passenger levels are approximately 5% lower than the 2023-24 season. This can primarily be attributed to one cruise-only operator not operating during the 2024-25 season. The number of landed passengers remained virtually the same between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 seasons.

The further spread of HPAI in Antarctica, particularly in the Antarctic Peninsula region, was, and remains, a high concern in advance of and during the 2024-25 season. The collaboration between IAATO, SCAR and COMNAP continued and was further enhanced with additional communications and protocols. Internal communication between IAATO and its operators continued to be strong during the season, which included increased reporting relating to HPAI (92 reports received for potential suspected cases).

Lessons learned from the 2024-25 season, considerations for our evolution as an industry and action points for the upcoming season were discussed at IAATO's Annual Meeting in Cascais, Portugal (14-17 April 2025). Additionally, 19 new guidelines were approved to further support visitor site management. Progress on IAATO's five-year strategic plan, *Embracing our Role as Stewards of Antarctica*, was reviewed, and short-term goals for 2025-26 were approved to support the plan further. All of these steps are important to fulfil IAATO's mission and to ensure operators' activities have no more than a minor or transitory impact on the environment.

Further information on IAATO Operators' activities and nationalities can be found in ATCM 47 IP032 *IAATO Vessel Overview of Antarctic Tourism: 2024-25 Season and Preliminary Estimates for 2025-26 Season*. IP033 *Deep Field and Air Overview of Antarctic Tourism: 2024-25 Season and Preliminary Estimates for 2025-26 Season*. ATCM 46 (2024) IP107 *A Catalogue of IAATO Operator Activities*.

Further information on IAATO tourism statistics focused on site usage and management can be found in ATCM 47 IP034 *A Five-Year Overview and 2024–25 Season Report on IAATO Operator Use of Antarctic Peninsula Landing Sites and ATCM Visitor Site Guidelines* and ATCM 46 (2024) IP108 *IAATO Site Management Methods*. The Membership Directory can be found at www.iaato.org.

IAATO Annual Meeting

IAATO's 2025 Annual Meeting was held in Cascais, Portugal, 14-17 April 2025. IAATO was pleased to have Treaty Party member representatives from Australia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom attend the open sessions as well as other valued stakeholders, including ASOC.

Actions at the annual meeting included:

- Review of IAATO's five-year strategy, *Embracing Our Role as Stewards of Antarctica* and the status of the 2024-25 Short Term Actions (See Attachment 1) and the approval of six Short Term Actions for 2025-26, examples which include:
 - Harness new and improve existing technology to enhance operational safety and efficiency, including the release of the new IAATO Antarctic Expedition App.
 - Develop new and existing relationships with outside experts (scientific and field specific) to further IAATO's strategic goals including data utilization.
 - Strengthen interactions with gateway stakeholders including collaborative opportunities
- Review of the 2024-25 season results of IAATO initiatives including:
 - 19 Mandatory/Provisional Operator Observations
 - 199 Site Stewardship Reports from 28 Sites submitted
 - 5020 Online Assessments taken
- Adoption of several new guidelines and infrastructure strengthening including:
 - 19 new and updated IAATO Visitor Site Guidelines, which cover both terrestrial and marine locations (ref. ATCM 47 IP034).
 - 20:1 Guest to *Actively* Guiding Field Staff Ratio
 - See IAATO's updated [IAATO Bylaws](#)
 - Creation of several Sub-Committees: Field Staff, Medical and Air-Cruise (IAATO now has 12 committees, nine working groups and three Sub-Committees.)
 - Update to IAATO's Statement on Marine Resource Conservation (See Attachment 2)

Treaty Party member representatives are cordially invited to join any of the open sessions during IAATO's future Annual Meetings. IAATO's 2026 Annual Meeting will be held in Annapolis, Maryland, USA, during the week of April 20, 2026.

IAATO Support of Research & Conservation

IAATO encourages collaborative opportunities with scientific organisations, particularly where these enhance the Antarctic community's understanding of human activities in the region.

Projects include(d):

- **HPAI Response:** IAATO's collaboration with COMNAP and SCAR continued regarding the enhancement of protocols related to HPAI, which included considerations when working with scientists as well as a reporting process for suspected cases to SCAR. These were communicated to IAATO Operators July through October of 2024 through virtual

Town Hall sessions, webinars and materials developed to assist with the education of field staff and guests related to these protocols. See also ATCM 47 WP050 *Update on High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza in Antarctica* and ATCM 47 IP035 *2024-25 Update IAATO Marine Operator High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza Response*.

- IAATO and its operators also continued to support scientific efforts to gather more information on HPAI, with financial, data and logistics support.
- IAATO/COMNAP Fellowships: IAATO, in collaboration with COMNAP, will continue to invest in the development of early-career researchers by awarding its seventh US\$15,000 Fellowship in 2025. Ten early-career persons have received funding since the award was launched. Suitable candidates are encouraged to apply by June 1, 2025. IAATO recognised two fellows in 2024: Dr. Katherine Gallagher from Stony Brook University, USA and Lucila Belen Morales from Andres Bello University, Chile.
- Alternative Fuels: As part of IAATO's commitment to help its operators reduce emissions and reach Net Zero by 2050, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) and Antarctic Gateway Committee continue to collate information on safe, sustainable fossil fuel alternatives that are suitable for polar operations. IAATO held a webinar on alternative maritime fuels for vessel operators and ship management companies in March 2025 by Charlotte Rojgaard from Bureau Veritas. The webinar was also attended by the COMNAP Secretariat. IAATO and COMNAP will continue to share information related to this topic.
- Climate Strategy and Guidance: The IAATO CCC updated its '*Climate Change Strategy Guidance for IAATO members*' and delivered new recommendations, '*Beyond Fuel: IAATO Sustainability and Emissions Reduction Guidance*' (See Attachments 3 and 4) to help all members reduce emissions outside of fuel. IAATO continues to invest in collecting fuel consumption data annually from its operators, working with an external analyst to monitor and understand aggregated greenhouse gas emissions, Antarctic gateway-to-gateway, each season. This analysis helps inform IAATO's internal strategy and that of its operators.
- Tourism Research Projects: IAATO continues to collaborate with stakeholders on tourism-related research, including programs under SCAR and projects funded through the Dutch Research Council, Proactive Management of Antarctic Tourism (ProAct) and Antarctic tourism - Research Programme on Assessment of Impacts and Responses (PT-REPAIR).
- Support in Antarctica: IAATO Operator expeditions during the 2024-25 season were able to provide support for various scientific projects, including but not limited to the Antarctic Site Inventory - Oceanites and Penguin Watch. Many IAATO Operators also provided logistical field support by air, overland traverse or vessel to National Antarctic Programs.

Other Work and Activities

IAATO also continues to prioritise activities that strengthen its institutional structure and help position it as a reputable, valued partner in the wider polar community. In addition to the work described above, over the past year, IAATO has:

- Hosted six webinars, covering 17 topics, for field staff at the beginning and end of the 2024-25 season to discuss best practices and lessons learned. These webinars were recorded and made available for field staff who were unable to attend the live session or wanted a refresher during the season. The recorded webinars are part of an education library available for field staff and operators. This practice will continue for the 2025-26 season.
- IAATO hosted a joint Polar Field Staff Conference with the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECCO), in Providence, Rhode Island, USA September 01-04, 2025.
- Launched the Polar Communicators Forum. Open to all communications, marketing, social media and sales teams working for IAATO members, the Forum creates a place to share updated guidance such as the *Travelling with Influencers* guidance and the *Communicating the Antarctic Experience* guidance (See Attachments 5 and 6).

In addition to ATCM Intersessional work, IAATO Secretariat staff and operator representatives participated in internal and external meetings, liaising with Treaty Party representatives, National Antarctic Program personnel, and governmental, scientific, environmental, and industry organizations, including but not limited to:

- **COMNAP Annual Meeting**, August 2024
- **SCAR Open Science Conference**, August 2024
- **AECO Conference & Annual Meeting**, October 2024
- **CCAMLR**, October 2024 (Online)
- **IMO Polar Maritime Seminar**, January 2025

Tourism Incidents 2024-25

IAATO's policy is to disclose major incidents to ensure risks are understood and appropriate lessons are learned for all Antarctic operators. There were no major environmental or safety incidents in the Antarctic Treaty area during the 2024-25 season.

IAATO is committed to reviewing all incidents, and taking appropriate actions for updating operational procedures as needed. In this way, referring back to the 2022 World Explorer Incident and following the publication of the [United States Coast Guard Report](#) released in October 2024, IAATO has circulated lessons learned with its operators. Additionally, IAATO continues to value the collaboration with COMNAP, in particular the triennial SAR Workshop, where all Antarctic stakeholders can work towards shared goals and lessons around incident management.

With Thanks

IAATO appreciates the opportunity to work cooperatively with Antarctic Treaty Parties, CCAMLR, COMNAP, SCAR, ASOC, IHO/HCA, WMO and others toward the long-term protection of Antarctica.



IAATO Five -Year Strategic Plan: Embracing Our Role as Stewards of Antarctica

ATCM UPDATE

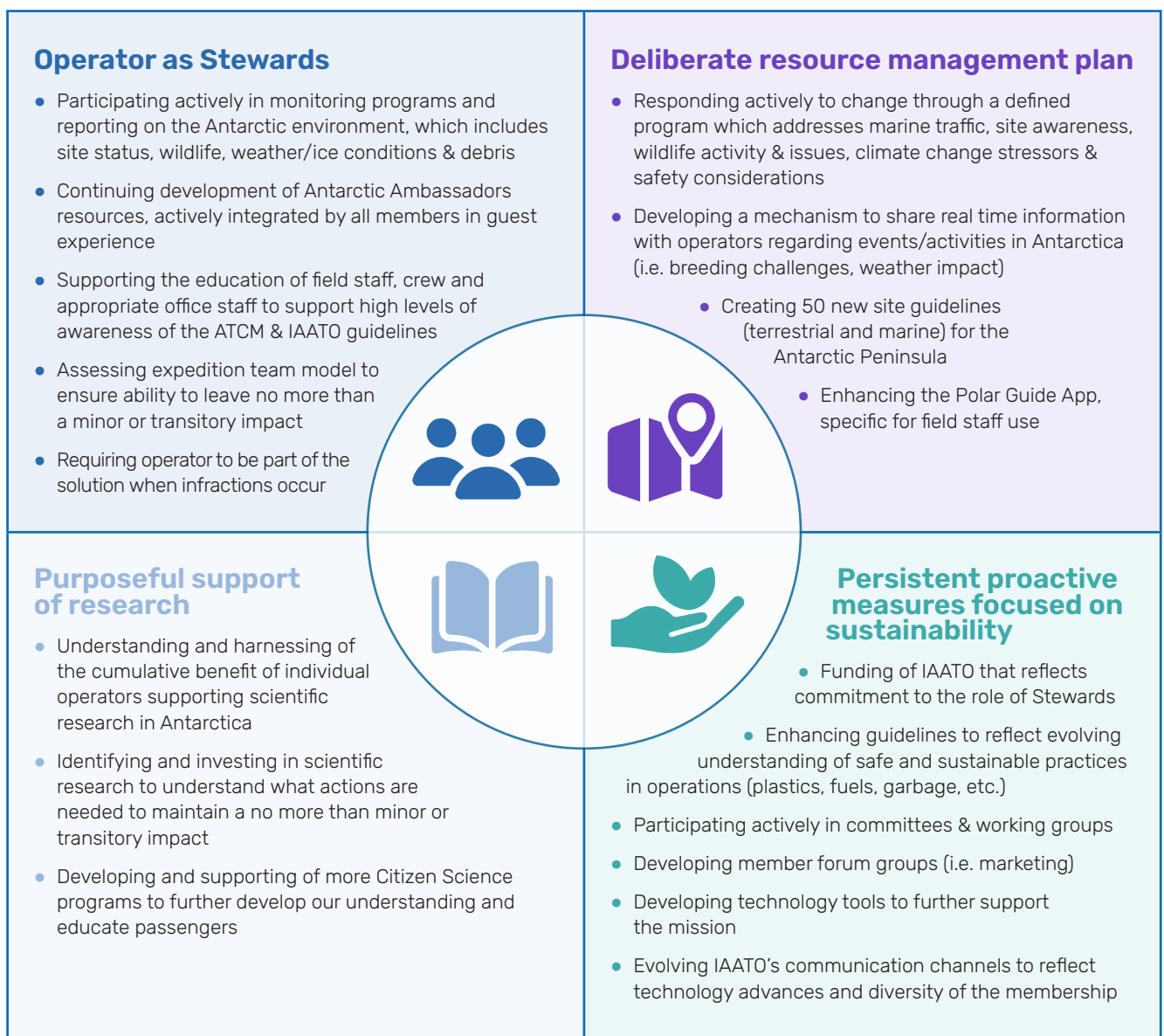




Embracing our Role as Stewards of Antarctica

Five-Year Strategic Plan

At IAATO's 2023 Annual Meeting in Hamburg, Germany, IAATO members approved a five-year strategic plan, *Embracing our Role as Stewards of Antarctica*. This plan is anchored by four goals, which collectively assist in meeting our mission of safe and environmentally responsible private section travel to Antarctica and having "no more than a minor or transitory impact", while considering the growth of tourism, environmental changes and stakeholder considerations.





Execution of the Strategic Plan

While the Five-Year Strategic Plan has four set goals for the Association (also see the Strategic Plan summary page above), our path is evaluated each year based upon resources available (both financial and human capital) as well as the pressures placed by the global markets, changing environment and catalyst events. As always, we must stay agile while focusing on the future and planning ahead.

Each year, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat evaluate the progress made on agreed steps and adjust accordingly. This

involves assessing the status, monitoring the progress of those actions, and evaluating and developing the following year's actions. These advances are presented to the membership at the following annual meeting. Progress updates will also be provided to the membership during the year in the form of quarterly reports.

This section will first provide an update on the 2024-25 Short-Term Actions and then describe the Short-Term Actions for 2025-26 which will be voted on at the 2025 Annual Meeting.

Update on the 2024-25 Short Term Actions Steps

(As Presented and Accepted at IAATO 2024)

Action				
Building on & continuing commitment to 23-24 Short Term Actions, as appropriate	●	●	●	●
Embracing the Antarctic Ambassadors Program by all Members	●			●
Developing the next generation Polar Guide App	●		●	●
Launching the Polar Communicators Forum & enhancing guidance regarding the Antarctic Experience	●			●
Engaging with the scientific community to identify opportunities to provide appropriate resources	●	●		●
Evolving the Mandatory Observers Program	●			●
Strengthening the infrastructure of IAATO	●	●	●	●

Embracing the Antarctic Ambassador Program by all IAATO Members

(As presented and accepted at IAATO 2024)

One of the major focuses of the Antarctic Ambassadorship Committee this year was to create material to help reinforce the important role that visitors to Antarctica have in becoming ambassadors for the continent. This material was shared with the membership in September of 2023. Feedback was received during the course

of the year which has helped to further enhance the material. It is critical at this time for all members to review the program and determine how they can incorporate it within their organization and support the important role that visitors to Antarctica have.

2025 Status

The Antarctic Ambassadorship Committee (AAC) increased internal communications efforts to make members and their field staff aware of the available *Antarctic Ambassador Expedition Program* resources and how to use them. This included presenting to guides at the 2024 Polar Field Staff Conference in Providence, Rhode Island. These outreach efforts highlighted challenges in keeping track of the program's implementation across the membership. As a result, early 2024-25 was spent working on a Phase 2 strategy to identify a field staff point of contact for each company, adjust the program to allow those delivering it to apply elements that best fit the itinerary of their expedition, and create a structure for testing and feedback to ensure the program evolves appropriately. This work will begin after IAATO 2025.



Developing the Next Generation Polar Guide App

(As presented and accepted at IAATO 2024)

Field staff rely on their electronic devices for immediate and easy access to IAATO materials. Currently, not all material is available on the current Polar Guide App due to security concerns. As technology has advanced, it is now possible to address these security concerns and have an improved tool for the field staff to employ out in the field. This next generation app will initially focus on providing the field staff with

the reference materials they need while out in the field and future developments will aim to allow easy data capture in the field as well, such as V-Caps and Site Steward Reports. The further development of this app represents a critically important investment in our ability to pursue best practices, real-time delivery of updated information, and vital data collection.

2025 Status

Last year at the Annual Meeting the Secretariat was finalizing the developer selection for this new App. The developer, Intellectsoft, was selected in July, and since August the new desktop and mobile versions have been under production. The new App is called the IAATO Antarctic Expedition App.

The IAATO Antarctic Expedition App replaces the Polar Guide App (mobile), FOM Sync app (desktop) and internal CDN server file manager. When launched in June 2025, it will offer more fit-for-purpose desktop and mobile options for members, stakeholders, guests and streamline Secretariat workflows. The desktop and mobile apps have similar functionality and features.

Both versions are integrated with the database single sign-on, meaning that that the user can log into both apps using the same login details for the website and database. Both versions will have additional and exciting new features including a better search functionality, document tags, a favorites folder, as well as automatic and manual synchronization. We will also be able to include the entire FOM on the mobile version (rather than only having select public-facing documents like the Polar Guide App currently does).

We will have a public-facing version, separated by necessary security barriers, that can be shared with guests and other stakeholders to increase their knowledge about IAATO, Antarctica and help them on their Ambassadorship path.

Launching the Polar Communicators Forum and Enhancing Guidance regarding the Antarctic Experience

(As presented and accepted at IAATO 2024)

As discussed at previous IAATO meetings, the importance of consistent communication of the Antarctic Experience to future visitors is crucial in setting expectations and delivering the experience to the guests. Social media has also added an additional strain to this process with guest expectations being set in appropriately due to rogue players.

The Polar Communicators Forum will allow operators to engage ideas regarding managing expectations and educating newcomers on appropriate media utilized when engaging with future guests. Additionally, through the sharing of best practices and individual experiences will also develop new tools for the membership as a whole to call upon when needed.

2025 Status

Two pieces of communications guidance were released in 2024. *Travelling with Influencers* (June) and *Communicating the Antarctic Experience* (August).

The first Polar Communicators Forum (PCF) session, open to all communications, marketing, social media and sales teams working for IAATO members, took place in June 2024 to introduce the *Travelling with Influencers* guidance. The second was held in August to introduce the *Communicating the Antarctic Experience* (August). Both sessions were well-attended, with attendees providing valuable feedback on both documents, allowing them to be enhanced for the 2025-26 season.



Engaging with the scientific community to identify opportunities to provide appropriate resources

(As presented and accepted at IAATO 2024)

Through conversations with members of the scientific community, we will begin to identify long-term opportunities to provide support for scientific research. These research opportunities will allow us to better understand the potential impact that we make but also ways to mitigate

the impact. We will also continually look for short-term opportunities, like the HPAI research expedition that took place in March of 2024. At next year's annual meeting, potential projects will be presented for member consideration.

2025 Status

We continue to remain engaged with Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), not only with the Systematic Conservation Plan (SCP) project and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) but also Ant-ICON. Ant-ICON wants to answer big questions relating to the conservation and management of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean with a focus on research to inform international decision-making and policy change. IAATO is regarded as an important stakeholder in this.

In 2024, IAATO gave its support to create an international Research Coordination Network to support research and monitoring of large-scale remote Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). It will use the Ross Sea region MPA as a model system.

We continue to support The Netherlands-funded research projects PROACT and PT-REPAIR as appropriate, and a new (for IAATO) and exciting development is a sub-project of PT-Repair 'Guide-Best'. We see some great collaborative discussions going on between the University of Groningen (NL), the University of Surrey and IAATO, involving the Ambassadorship Committee tasked with developing a research study that will help further the ambassadorship initiatives.

In addition to the superb HPAI monitoring that IAATO Operators continued to take part in this year, we also continue to fund the ongoing research and testing around HPAI and how it may affect the animal populations in Antarctica.

Research Project Description and Proponents:

Ant-ICON (SCAR): The Ant-ICON Scientific Research Programme aims to answer fundamental science questions (as identified by the SCAR Horizon Scan and emerging issues) relating to the conservation and management of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.

PROACT (Netherlands): 'Proactive Management of Antarctic Tourism: Exploring the Role of Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) Principles and Values and Best Practices Beyond the ATS' (ProAct). The project aims to support the Netherlands and possibly the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) in proactive management of tourism within the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS)

PT-REPAIR (Netherlands): Polar Tourism - Research Programme on Assessment of Impacts and Responses'. What is the impact of tourism on Antarctica, and how do you deal with this in policy?

GUIDE-BEST (Netherlands): Growing Understanding of Individual Drivers of Expectations and Behaviours to Enhance Sustainable Tourism in Antarctica. The project aims to get a better understanding of the drivers of expectations and changes in visitors' and guides' attitudes and behaviours through their Antarctic experiences during and after visits, while contextualising these experiences against the *modi operandi* and development of the Antarctic tourism sector.



Evolving the Mandatory Observer Program

(As presented and accepted at IAATO 2024)

After two full seasons of 25+ observations, lessons learned and opportunities to enhance the program have been identified. During the year, we will look to provide improved training and additional resources for the observers and information for Operators to help set

expectations appropriately. Additionally, the observation report will be further enhanced to establish appropriate accountability for the operator being observed as well as updated to encompass other considerations as appropriate.

2025 Status

Secretariat support was increased to further review, collate and analyze Observation Reports for themes and practices. The additional Secretariat support also aided the Membership Committee in tracking and following up with report feedback. Improvements were made to all observer forms. These will be ready for use during the 2025-26 season. Additional resources for supporting observer onboarding and training have been created and will also be implemented for the 2025-26 season.

Strengthening the Infrastructure of IAATO

(As presented and accepted at IAATO 2024)

As the Secretariat has increased to support the growth of tourism, process and procedures that were appropriate for a smaller organization need to be enhanced. Consideration needs to be given to appropriate human resources, communications

and finance support as well as operational controls to protect the organization. Additionally legal documents need to be enhanced to reflect the expansion of the organization and reflect the changes in how we operate.

Status (March 2025)

During the 2024-25 fiscal year, IAATO made three new hires:

- A **Resource Management Coordinator** responsible for the delivery and evolution of IAATO's monitoring projects.
- An **Assistant Communications Manager** to assist with media monitoring and response, developing education and outreach materials, and enhance IAATO's media presence.
- A **Senior Finance Manager** to lead the finance department operations.

Due to three positions (Executive Director, Events Manager, and General Staff Assistant) moving on to other opportunities in September and October of 2024, existing Secretariat needed to shift focus to ensure core functions of the organization were maintained to the highest level, particularly during the season. For this reason, replacements for existing staff and the new hiring which was outlined at IAATO 2024 in Annapolis was put on pause until February 2025.

Three new positions are currently under review:

- **Events/Membership Manager**
- **Data Assistant**
- **Director of Operations**

Our goal is to hire these positions prior to the end of the 2024-25 fiscal year. During the new fiscal year, we will then look to continue strengthening the Secretariat as necessary to meet the increased complexities of our organization's and stakeholder needs.

IAATO Support of Antarctic Marine Conservation and Science

IAATO manages its activities to support the long-term protection and preservation of Antarctica's unique natural, scientific and heritage values. Its objectives include advocating and promoting operation by its Membership within the parameters of the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS), which includes, among other bodies, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and enhancing awareness and concern for the conservation of the Antarctic environment and associated ecosystems.

In 2019, IAATO expressed its intent to contribute to the success of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) established through the ATS. Since that time, IAATO's contributions have included expanding stakeholder engagement, such as attending CCAMLR meetings as an observer, and expanding its marine monitoring capabilities.

This document builds on the IAATO 2019 statement by providing IAATO members with an updated position on IAATO's approach to supporting the management of human activities in the Southern Ocean.

In accordance with IAATO's objective to have no more than a minor or transitory impact, IAATO reaffirms its support for science-based methods and informed management for protecting the Antarctic marine environment and the species living in it.

IAATO calls on all stakeholders to continue working together to appropriately manage human activities in Antarctica, including the safe and sustainable harvest of marine living resources.

As a responsible steward of the environment and an advocate for sustainable and responsible management of human activities in Antarctica IAATO uses the following framework for supporting marine conservation:

1. Supporting science to inform conservation management and decision making by

- a. Direct financial and logistical support of research in the Antarctic, monitoring population- and system-level change in indicator species such as research by Oceanites and Penguin Watch.
- b. Collecting data on marine mammal distribution (Voluntary-Cetacean and Pinniped Sightings - VCaPs) to inform management decisions such as vessel slow down requirements in IAATO geofenced whale areas.
- c. Supporting large scale research and policy coordination efforts, including the Ross Sea Coordination Network, which focuses on researching the ecosystem structure and management in the Ross Sea MPA.
- d. Coordinating with the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), among others, to further scientific understanding of the Antarctic ecosystem and management of human activities within the Antarctic Treaty Area.
- e. Supporting citizen science to both engage visitors in the science process as well as to directly contribute to data collection use for large scale research on the distribution and abundance of species in Antarctica, such as projects like Happy Whale and Fjord Phyto.

2. Supporting MPAs as a method for marine conservation by

- a. Supporting the view that MPAs should provide for the long-term protection, understanding, and enjoyment of Antarctic marine resources and heritage.
- b. Supporting multi-stakeholder engagement and participation to manage human activities within MPAs.
- c. Continuing a commitment as environmental stewards to engage in monitoring, evaluation, and information sharing for the sustainable management of MPAs.

3. Sharing information through the Antarctic Treaty System to facilitate discussions by

- a. Attending ATCM as an Invited Expert, actively contributing to discussions related to the management of human activities.
- b. Attending CCAMLR annual meetings as an Observer, to provide information on IAATO activities and engage on relevant issues related to human activities.
- c. Actively contributing to the CCAMLR Marine Debris Monitoring Programme by including the CCAMLR e-forms for opportunistic marine debris and entanglement sightings in the IAATO Field Operations Manual (FOM section 4 – Reporting forms and checklists).
- d. Confirming that fishing vessels sighted by IAATO member vessels in the CCAMLR convention area are included on the CCAMLR list of authorized vessels to support efforts to eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

4. Maintaining strong working relationships with marine fisheries stakeholders to foster connection and information sharing across industries by

- a. Supporting responsible and sustainable efforts to self-manage human activities in the Antarctic by organizations such as the Association of Responsible Krill Harvesting Companies (ARK) and the Coalition of Legal Toothfish Operators (COLTO).



Beyond Fuel: IAATO Sustainability and Emissions Reduction Guidance

Objective

IAATO Operators have pledged to take necessary steps to understand, account for and reduce their emissions, including reaching Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050¹. To complement this commitment, the IAATO Climate Change Committee (CCC) has created two guidance documents for members:

1. **Climate Change Strategy: Guidance for IAATO Members**
2. **Beyond Fuel: Sustainability and Emissions Reduction Guidance**

The CCC recognizes the significant work that IAATO and its members are doing to reduce and eliminate emissions. While an important focus is exploring how sustainable energy, including alternative fuels, can be used to meet our goals, members are also managing emissions and enhancing sustainability through a variety of strategies beyond just focusing on fuel. **This Beyond Fuel Guidance** aims to provide Operator and Associate members with further ideas for their strategies inspired by United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and environmental, social, and corporate governance concepts. This guidance is intended to reflect IAATO's continued shared commitment to operating responsibly while inspiring positive change in our industry.

Guidance

1. Reduce operational emissions

Together, we continue to take meaningful steps to reduce our emissions.

Ship operations: Optimize speed and distance travelled to minimize emissions, streamline landing schedules to avoid unnecessary travel.

Flight operations: Optimize speed and travel distances to minimize emissions, adjust altitude to reduce contrails, streamline landing schedules and avoid unnecessary travel.

Technology: Invest in the latest technologies and transition to low-emission alternatives where possible. Consider the performance of accessories and equipment.

Staff and crew travel: Review travel schedules to avoid unnecessary flights, explore options to sustainably reduce or offset travel emissions and pursue opportunities to reduce Scope 3 emissions through nature-based carbon removal programs, all while maintaining operational efficiency.

Hospitality: Offer plant-based options to lower Scope 3 emissions and minimize the environmental impact of catering, avoiding high-impact foods like beef and unsustainable seafood. See also Section 5.

2. Minimize waste and promote reusability

Reuse, reduce and recycle: foster a culture of reusability.

Biodegradable and microplastic free products: Use biodegradable and microplastic free soaps, cleaning agents and chemicals for both operational and guest use where possible. Consider natural fibres in clothing and materials. Avoid unnecessary waste, including food waste.

¹ IAATO Operators committed to the following at the IAATO Annual Meeting in Providence, 2022:

- Taking the necessary steps to account for our greenhouse gas emissions;
- Reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2050 compared with 2008;
- Implementing a meaningful climate strategy that includes target setting and allocating resources;
- Reaching Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050



Unnecessary single-use plastic: Continue to phase out single-use plastics in favour of reusable or biodegradable alternatives wherever possible. Switch to packaging using biodegradable materials.

Visitor awareness: Distribute the [IAATO Reducing Waste – Guidelines for Visitors to Antarctica](#) in pre-departure information for guests, staff and crew. Empower visitors by educating them on the importance of using biodegradable products and fostering a shared responsibility for minimizing waste, microplastics and conserving water.

3. Enhance water and energy efficiency

By making small, consistent changes, we can significantly conserve resources.

Energy efficiency: Implement energy-saving measures in offices, warehouses, and lodging facilities, such as energy-efficient appliances, lighting, and temperature control systems.

Water conservation: Encourage a culture of reduced water consumption across your organisation, including among guests and personnel. Utilize water-efficient practices and technologies, such as low-flow fixtures or water recycling systems, to reduce consumption while maintaining operational excellence.

4. Vendor and supplier selection

Choosing the right partners can strengthen collective impact.

Sustainable partners: Collaborate with vendors and suppliers who align with our core values, prioritizing those committed to sustainable and ethical practices. Examples of such practices could include:

- Waste reduction;
- Energy efficiency
- Net zero/emission reduction strategies
- Offering plant-based/locally sourced menus
- Using sustainable materials (e.g. certified timber or products that are reusable, biodegradable, made of recycled content and/or locally sourced).

It may be beneficial to identify appropriate standards or certification that you wish your ideal suppliers to have e.g., ISO (International Organization for Standardization) standards.

Vendor Selection Checklist: Creating a selection checklist can help you choose appropriate service providers and partners. An example template of criteria and an assessment method is provided in [ANNEX A – Vendor Selection Checklist](#).

Bulk delivery systems: Encourage the use of bulk delivery systems to minimize packaging waste and transportation emissions.

5. Local Sourcing & Hospitality

Local Sourcing – what does local mean?

Local sourcing can help reduce transport related emissions

In the context of Antarctic gateways serving Operators, “Local” refers to suppliers, businesses, or service providers that operate within these distance bands from the operational hub or regional base:

Tier 1: Within 1,000 km (local and regional sourcing, prioritizing direct supply routes with lower emissions).

Tier 2: 1,000 – 2,500 km (extended regional sourcing, covering broader supply networks while maintaining sustainability considerations).

Tier 3: 2,500 – 3,500 km (long-range sustainable sourcing where local and regional options are limited).

This definition prioritizes reducing emissions mileage while remaining practical for regions with diverse needs, particularly remote areas where local sourcing options may be limited. Additionally, it supports farm-to-table initiatives, local hiring, and engaging with the community.

Suppliers beyond these distances may still be considered “local” if they demonstrate strong ties to the region, can facilitate bulk delivery systems, work directly with producers, and/or contribute meaningfully to the local economy.

Vendors should specify the percentage of products sourced from each tier in their supply chain. For simpler supply chains (e.g., fresh produce), sourcing predominantly from Tier 1 or Tier 2 is encouraged. For complex supply chains (e.g., multi-ingredient products), vendors should ensure that at least **50% of sourcing** comes from Tier 1, Tier 2, or a combination of both.

Hospitality

Sustainable sourcing in hospitality reduces environmental impact while supporting local economies. Prioritizing responsible partnerships strengthens both sustainability and business resilience. Encourage collaboration with hospitality vendors that implement initiatives like energy-efficient operations, waste reduction, plant-based options and local sourcing to lower transport emissions and support regional economies.



6. Community engagement

Partnerships and community engagement can enhance sustainability and promote wellbeing.

Local communities: In the communities where you operate, consider partners and businesses, including hotels and restaurants, that demonstrate environmental responsibility and align with your core values (see also Section 4, Vendor and supplier selection).

Local employment: Actively explore hiring local staff to support regional economies and strengthen community relationships. This can help reduce emissions while creating meaningful opportunities for local workers.

Encourage vendors to adopt fair employment practices that create opportunities for local workers.

Employee engagement: Foster a culture of sustainability through learning and training. Enable the sharing of environmentally conscious habits.

Create opportunities for feedback and open exchange of ideas to inspire continuous improvement.

Together, we make a difference

This guidance is designed to offer practical steps that can be implemented collectively, aiming to strengthen our shared commitment to environmentally responsible private-sector travel.

Together, we have the expertise, passion, and collaboration needed to minimize emissions and enhance sustainability. Let's embrace this guidance, support each other in their implementation, and continue setting the standard for responsible Antarctic operations.



ANNEX A – Vendor Selection Checklist

Purpose and Implementation

This checklist is a flexible tool designed to help all IAATO members evaluate any vendor or service provider that interacts with their Antarctic related operations. The purpose is to promote sustainability, reduce environmental change and foster ethical business partnerships.

Not all sections will apply to every vendor. Members should complete relevant sections and mark “N/A” where necessary.

The checklist supports informed vendor selection based on sustainability best practices, without enforcing rigid requirements.

How this checklist supports you:

Sustainability alignment: Do potential vendors align with your organization’s Environmental Sustainability and Governance (ESG)² or other core values? Will they help move you towards your commitments for responsible travel including IAATO’s emissions reduction targets?

- **Objective evaluation:** Using a scoring system to assess vendors can boost transparency for everyone involved.
- **Continuous improvement:** This process can encourage dialogue and feedback, inspiring change and strengthening of ESG practices on both sides.

How to use this checklist:

1. Evaluate each vendor using the checklist.
2. Rank each vendor (A, B, or C) based on their responses and evidence.
3. Use the scoring system to calculate results.
4. Select vendors with high scores or clear plans for improvement.

Checklist sections for potential vendors

1. Governance

1.a. Does your company have a mission or purpose statement that includes commitment to Environment, Social and Governance principles such as sustainability, community support and safeguarding practices?

Level A: Yes, the statement explicitly commits to sustainability and is actively communicated across the organization.

Level B: Yes, the statement includes some elements of commitment to society and the planet but lacks active communication or clear alignment with sustainability principles.

Level C: No, but plans are in place to create a mission or purpose statement addressing these values.

Suggested evidence: Attach the mission or purpose statement and any documentation showing its communication or implementation.

1.b. Does your company provide sustainability training programs for staff?

Level A: Yes, training programs are mandatory and ongoing.

Level B: Yes, but programs are optional or limited in scope.

Level C: No, but plans are in place to develop training programs.

Suggested evidence: Attach details or schedules of training programs.

² In November 2024 at COP 29, the ISO released new [ESG implementation Principles](#) to enhance understanding of ESG as well as offer guidance that will enable more consistent reporting.



2. Reduction of operational emissions

2.a. Does your company prioritize sustainable travel options for staff and crew where possible? For example, train travel instead of flights for shorter journeys, public transport in cities, choosing direct flights rather than routes with multiple layovers where possible; choosing hotels that prioritize social and environmental responsibility.

Level A: Yes, always.

Level B: Yes, occasionally.

Level C: No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents or visuals.

2.b. Has your company implemented using low emission vehicles, such as hybrid or electric, in its operations wherever feasible, or chosen vehicles based on best fuel efficiency?

Level A: Yes, in all operations.

Level B: Yes, in some operations.

Level C: No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents or visuals.

2.c. Has your company improved the emission performance of equipment? Examples may include vehicles, heavy machinery, generators, stoves, tender boats and applicable aircraft.

Level A: Yes, across all equipment.

Level B: Yes, for some equipment.

Level C: No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents or visuals.

2.d. Has your company reduced the energy use and efficiency of office / factory / warehouse equipment?

Level A: Yes, across all equipment.

Level B: Yes, for some equipment.

Level C: No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents or visuals.

2.e. Does your company measure and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions (carbon footprint) within its **operations**?

Level A: Yes, with comprehensive tracking and emissions reduction strategies in place (e.g., optimized delivery routes, local sourcing).

Level B: Yes, partially tracked with some mitigation measures.

Level C: No, but plans are in place to develop a process to measure greenhouse emissions

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents such as greenhouse gas accounting, logistics records, emissions reports and/or emissions reduction initiatives.

2.f. Does your company measure and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions (carbon footprint) within its **supply chain**?

Level A: Yes, with comprehensive tracking and emissions reduction strategies in place (e.g., optimized delivery routes, local sourcing).

Level B: Yes, partially tracked with some mitigation measures.

Level C: No, but plans are in place to develop a process to measure greenhouse emissions

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents such as greenhouse gas accounting, logistics records, emissions reports and/or emissions reduction initiatives.



3. Waste minimization and reuse

3.a. Does your company use biodegradable products in its operations and for client/guest use if applicable?

- Level A:** Yes, in all areas.
- Level B:** Yes, in some areas.
- Level C:** No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents or visuals.

3.b. Has your company eliminated single-use plastics in favour of reusable or biodegradable alternatives wherever possible?

- Level A:** Yes, completely.
- Level B:** Yes, partially.
- Level C:** No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents or visuals.

3.c. Does your company educate partners / clients / guests / stakeholders on the use of sustainable products?

- Level A:** Yes, always.
- Level B:** Yes, occasionally.
- Level C:** No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents or visuals.

3.d. Does your company have a recycling program in place for operations and client/guest activities, if applicable?

- Level A:** Yes, comprehensive and actively managed.
- Level B:** Yes, but limited in scope.
- Level C:** No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach recycling policies or program details.

3.e. Does your company prioritize sourcing products without microplastics or harmful additives wherever possible?

- Level A:** Yes, across all products.
- Level B:** Yes, but only for some products.
- Level C:** No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Provide product details or sourcing certifications.

4. Supplier and partner selection

4.a. Does your company collaborate with suppliers that share your sustainability values?

- Level A:** Yes, always.
- Level B:** Yes, occasionally.
- Level C:** No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents or visuals.

4.b. Does your company promote the use of bulk delivery systems to minimize packaging waste?

- Level A:** Yes, in all deliveries.
- Level B:** Yes, in some deliveries.
- Level C:** No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents or visuals.

5. Hospitality

5.a. Does your company work with hotels, restaurants, catering suppliers and other hospitality-related service providers that demonstrate social and environmental responsibility?

- Level A:** Yes, always.
- Level B:** Yes, occasionally.
- Level C:** No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents or visuals.



6. Community engagement

6.a. Does your company support local suppliers and businesses to reduce emissions?

Level A: Yes, always.

Level B: Yes, occasionally.

Level C: No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach supporting documents or visuals.

6.b. Does your company hire local staff and support employment opportunities within the local community?

Level A: Over 50% of staff hired are from the local community.

Level B: 30–50% of staff hired are from the local community.

Level C: Less than 30% of staff hired are from the local community, but plans are in place to improve.

Suggested evidence: Documentation showing percentage of local staff hired.

Employment policies or practices that prioritize hiring locally.

Skill shortage reports or data showing the unavailability of required expertise locally.

Job descriptions and qualifications highlighting the specific skills or expertise required for roles that cannot be sourced locally.

Records of efforts to recruit locally, such as job advertisements, training initiatives, or partnerships with community organizations.

6.c. What percentage of your supply chain products is sourced locally? For remote gateways serving Antarctic Operators, locally is considered within 1000 km of the operational hub (or relevant regional hub)?

Level A: Over 50% of products sourced locally.

Level B: 30–50% of products sourced locally.

Level C: Less than 30% of products sourced locally, with plans to improve.

Suggested evidence: Provide supply chain maps, procurement data, or certifications demonstrating local sourcing.

6.d. Does your company engage in active initiatives for community support?

Level A: Yes, with extensive programs.

Level B: Yes, but on a limited scale.

Level C: No, but plans are in place.

Suggested evidence: Attach details of community initiatives.

6.e. Does your company engage in direct relationships with suppliers, producers, or service providers to ensure sustainable and ethical sourcing practices, bypassing third-party intermediaries where possible?

Level A: Maintains strong, direct partnerships with multiple suppliers, producers, or service providers, ensuring traceability, sustainability, and transparency.

Level B: Occasionally works directly with suppliers or producers, with partial traceability and sustainable sourcing practices.

Level C: Primarily relies on third parties but has plans to develop direct sourcing relationships.

Suggested evidence: Documentation of direct partnerships with suppliers or producers.

Supply chain details highlighting direct relationships.

Certifications or reports demonstrating traceability, transparency, and ethical sourcing.

7. Ethical Practices

7.a. Does your company ensure humane treatment and care of animals across its operations while implementing environmentally ethical practices throughout its operations?

Level A: Yes, with robust policies in place.

Level B: Yes, but policies are informal.

Level C: No, but plans are in place to develop policies.

Suggested evidence: Attach relevant animal welfare documentation.

Other considerations:

As part of any ESG framework, members may wish to consider the workplace practices of potential vendors e.g., demonstrative efforts to cultivate diversity, policies for fair wages, equal opportunities and inclusivity.



How to score the checklist

1. Assign points

For each item:

- **Level A (3 points):** Fully implemented.
- **Level B (2 points):** Partially implemented.
- **Level C (1 point):** Not implemented, but plans exist.
- **No Response (0 points):** No response or evidence provided.

2. Calculate section scores

1. Sum the Points: Add up all points scored in the section.
2. Determine Section Percentage: $\frac{\text{Points scored}}{\text{Max points for section}} \times 100$

3. Apply Section Weights

Multiply each section's percentage by its weight. These are suggested weights. You may wish to adapt them for your organisation:

Governance	20%
Reduction of operational emissions	30%
Waste minimization and reuse	20%
Efficiency in water and energy use	15%
Supplier and partner selection	10%
Hospitality and community engagement	5%

4. Calculate the total score

Add all weighted scores for a final total.

5. Determine ranking

- **80-100%:** Level A (Exceptional alignment)
- **50-79%:** Level B (Satisfactory alignment)
- **Below 50%:** Level C (Minimum alignment)

Using a scoring system can help promote fair, consistent and actionable evaluations. It may help to have more than one member of staff do each assessment. Operators can use the results to select vendors that align with Operator and IAATO's commitment to sustainability and responsible practices while vendors can leverage their scores to identify areas for improvement.





CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

Guidance for IAATO Members

March 2025

IAATO Climate Change Committee

This document serves as a tool for members to build their own climate strategy.



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IAATO Pledge

IAATO members recognize the threat of global climate change to our planet, including Antarctica. In line with IAATO's mission to advocate and promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic, IAATO members in 2022 pledged to:

- Implement a meaningful climate strategy that includes target setting and allocating resources.
- Take the necessary steps to account for our greenhouse gas emissions.
- Reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2050 compared with 2008¹.
- Reach Net Zero² as soon as possible before 2050.

IAATO's climate strategy guidance is, simply, to: (a) support understanding of the emissions of our membership organization in Antarctica and (b) the ambitions and actions of the members. To (c) support the membership to accelerate their own decarbonization and (d) communicate these learnings and opportunities among members and other stakeholders as appropriate.

Understanding IAATO Operators' Impact

IAATO Climate Change Committee (CCC) has two datasets being tracked that enables us to understand our climate impact and trajectory. Those are the Climate Action Survey and the members fuel consumption (emissions) data.

The Climate Action Survey started in 2021, to guide the work of the CCC, and is now an annual way for the CCC to track the progress of member's climate actions and ambitions.

The CCC conducted its first greenhouse gas (GHG) Initial Assessment on the 2019-2020 season (for vessels from gateway to gateway). The accuracy of the data was limited because it was based on assumptions about fuel consumption and distance travelled. At IAATO's 2022 Annual Meeting, IAATO Operators agreed to annually submit fuel consumption data to IAATO, and this began in the 2022-2023 season.

IAATO now collates direct fuel consumption data (type and volume of each fuel) for all IAATO operators' vessels, aircraft and accessories from Antarctic gateway to gateway. It allows IAATO and the CCC to understand our emissions and keep track of changes through time.

Individual Member Climate Strategy

Through the IAATO Pledge, individual Operators have each committed to create their own strategy. The individual strategy of any company can more or less follow the core IAATO strategy of 'understand – set targets – reduce'. The following sections provide guidance for IAATO members to build a simple climate strategy:

1. Understand your emissions
2. Set targets to reduce your emissions
3. Reduce your emissions

Understand your emissions & contribution to climate change.

Organizations are often good at developing and implementing decarbonization plans and engaging stakeholders as part of this process but can get stuck when it comes to actually measuring their emissions. This includes choosing a baseline, establishing the scopes of what to include, making detailed measurements or using industry averages. It will also help to assess risks and impacts and identify emission hotspots – vital to finding the most effective actions to take.

Greenhouse gas emissions put simply

The atmosphere is warmed by the existence greenhouse gasses (GHG), including carbon. These GHG are emitted into the atmosphere when we burn fossil fuels such as diesel / MGO / avgas. These greenhouse gas (including carbon), emissions are your contribution to climate change, your footprint, and what you need to account for and reduce. Greenhouse gas audits convert all the GHGs into a carbon equivalent figure (CO₂e).

In shipping and aviation, burning fossil fuel in these craft is by far the main source of our emissions.

¹ Currently under review by the IAATO CCC

² As defined by the [glossary](#) in the IPCC Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C.



What to include

Emissions are categorized into three 'scopes' according to how much you can control or influence them.

You will always count your scope 1 emissions because these are under your direct control (such as your own car). You can decide whether to include and how to include your scope 2 and 3, depending on the purpose of your audit.

The definitions of Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions are as follows:

Scope 1 emissions: These are *direct* greenhouse gas emissions that come from sources owned or controlled by the organization, such as emissions from vessels, aircraft, equipment, and facilities you control.

If you charter a vessel, you can still control its emissions via your contact agreement, route choice, speeds, etc.

Scope 2 emissions: These are *indirect* emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, heating, and cooling consumed by the organization. For IAATO members, this is your home office since electricity on vessels and aircraft is included in your fuel consumption in Scope 1.

Scope 3 emissions: These are *indirect* emissions from sources not owned or directly controlled by the organization but are related to its activities, such as emissions from non-chartered commercial flights, business travel, staff commuting, food served, waste disposal and upstream and downstream activities in the supply chain.

For IAATO members that have no control of vessel/aircraft emissions (only a partial charter), the vessel/aircraft fuel will be Scope 3. For members that have vessel or aircraft fuel in Scope 1, Scope 3 will include the upstream emissions of that fuel (well-to-tank). The emissions that are in your Scope 3, are another companies' Scope 1 (ie: the commercial airline flown will have the aircraft fuel as their Scope 1). Companies often have to use recognized/published averages to account for these emissions.

Below are **TWO** different methods you can use to determine your Greenhouse gas footprint

- I. Do a full greenhouse gas (GHG) audit of your Antarctic/global operations with a reputable company or qualified person. Ensure methodologies and tools are aligned with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) guidelines on measurement, reporting and verification. Your methodology should be transparent and accessible.

Resource: [Greenhouse Gas Protocol emissions calculation tools and guidance](#)

Resource: Guidance to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) reduce emissions are available. For example, the [Carbon Trust: Journey to Net Zero tool](#) or the [SME Climate Hub](#).

- II. For operators, it's likely >90% of your Scope 1 emissions will be your vessel/aircraft fuel, so you will come very close to your true figure by doing a simple calculation of your greenhouse gas emissions based on your fuel consumption. You can multiply your fuel consumption by globally recognized conversion factors. Note this is for Scope 1 emissions only for the vessels/aircraft operated.

Example: 100 tonnes of MGO fuel = 3.2 tonnes of carbon.

Resources for conversion tables for fuel to CO₂e:

IMO

Page 74 in the IMO document "[Fourth IMO GreenHouse Gas Study](#)" (1 tonne Marine Gas Oil = 3.206tCO₂). IMO – MEPC.281(70)

International Energy Agency (IEA):

Provides comprehensive data on global energy consumption and related emissions. [IEA Data](#)

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

Offers detailed emissions data for the U.S., including greenhouse gases and other pollutants. [EPA Data](#)

European Environment Agency (EEA):

Provides extensive data on environmental issues in Europe, including emissions from fuel consumption. [EEA Data](#)

UK government conversion tables

Use the [UK government conversion tables](#) updates annually (2022 tables: 1 tonne Marine Gas Oil = 3.206tCO₂ OR 3.249tCO₂e for all GHG)



Set Targets To Reduce Your Emissions

Building a climate strategy or roadmap can help your organization identify and achieve its targets. External experts can help you with this process.

What should operators be aiming for?

To keep global temperature rise below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100, we need to reach net zero² by 2050, as outlined at COP21 in Paris.

Further, the latest IPCC report ([IPCC AR6](#)), released in April 2022, has determined that in order to keep global temperature rise below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100 (with an overshoot and return to 1.5°C), GHG emissions should be reduced by 23% in 2030 and by 75% in 2050 relative to 2019.

IAATO members have already pledged to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and to reach Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050. Individual operators are encouraged and expected to be more ambitious.

According to the IAATO Climate Action Survey in 2023-24:

One IAATO operator has already reached net zero > Three IAATO operators have set a target for net zero 2030.

What other current regulatory requirements should IAATO members be adhering to or taking note of?

Helsinki Declaration on Climate Change and the Antarctic

Adopted by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in 2023 (Resolution 2), [Helsinki Declaration on Climate Change and the Antarctic](#) states that Antarctic Treaty Parties are 'deeply concerned' about the irreversible changes that are likely to occur without 'accelerated efforts to reduce GHG emissions. It also encourages all Antarctic operators, including 'tourist and non-governmental operators to continue to reduce their carbon footprints and move towards carbon neutral ('net zero') operations' as well as reducing any impacts on the Antarctic environment.

International Maritime Organisation of the United Nations (IMO)

The [IMO Strategy on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions](#) set a target for at least 40% improvement in carbon *intensity* by 2030 relative to 2008, and 70% by 2050. Further, total annual GHG emissions from international shipping should be reduced by at least 50% by 2050 compared to 2008. ([infographic](#))

The strategy also sets out indicative checkpoints for 2030 and 2040. These are, to reduce the *total annual GHG emissions* from international shipping by at least 20%, striving for 30%, by 2030 and 70%, striving for 80%, by 2040.

Marine Environmental Protection Committee 76 (MEPC76). Vessels >5000GT (approx 65% of the current and projected IAATO fleet) already need to comply with MEPC 76 Carbon Intensity Indicator (CII). This requires a carbon emissions intensity reduction of 11% by 2026, with 2019 the baseline year.

What are other Organizations doing?

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA)

CLIA announced a global cruise industry commitment to reduce *the rate* of carbon emissions across the industry fleet by 40% by 2030 compared to 2008 levels, in line with IMO's initial strategy. CLIA ocean-going cruise lines are pursuing net carbon neutral cruising by 2050 across the global fleet.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA)

IATA has [committed](#) to net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

ICAO has a long-term goal of net zero by 2050 with an intermediate plan to reduce CO2 emissions in aviation by 5% by 2030.

What pledges, targets and collaborations are available for members to join?

These are provided for information only. While not necessarily endorsed by IAATO, they are backed by credible organizations. Consider any commitments carefully -- ensure they are authentic to your purpose and achievable.

Science-Based Targets Initiative

More than 2000 businesses and financial institutions are working with the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) to reduce their emissions in line with climate science. Various targets can be registered.

SME Climate Commitment

Linked to the SME Climate Hub, a global non-profit that supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), this commitment offers an official pathway for SMEs to join the global Race to Zero campaign.



[Glasgow Declaration](#)

The Glasgow Declaration states, “We declare our shared commitment to unite all stakeholders in transforming tourism to deliver effective climate action. We support the global commitment to **halve emissions by 2030 and reach Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050**. We will consistently align our actions with the latest scientific recommendations, so as to ensure our approach remains consistent with a rise of no more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100.” [Full text](#).

[Tourism Declares Climate Emergency](#)

A global community of 437 tourism organizations, companies and professionals, all committed to delivering a Climate Action Plan aligned with the need to cut emissions in half by 2030. They initiated the Glasgow declaration; their pledge is the **same as the Glasgow declaration**.

[30x30](#)

Two international networks, Campaign for Nature and Linking Tourism & Conservation (LT&C), have started an initiative which focuses on the nature based-**tourism sector** in promoting and supporting an ambitious new Protected Area target. The aim is to have **30% of the world’s marine and terrestrial protected areas by 2030** (currently only 15 percent of land and 7 percent of our ocean are protected).

[United Nations Global Compact](#)

The world’s largest corporate sustainability initiative.

Reduce your Emissions

How can IAATO members reduce their GHG emissions?

There is no silver bullet nor single solution to decarbonization yet operators must act now. Many small actions can add up to a large percentage, and solutions will be different for every operator.

Decarbonization is a process and a fast-evolving subject. In the short-term, lack of alternative fuels and sustainable shore power at gateways is a major challenge to decarbonization. Picking low-hanging fruit (like reducing single-use plastics) can help maintain motivation, but it is essential to ultimately aim higher (such as using alternative fuels) to get real decarbonization.

In the short term, to reach your 2030 goals, efficiency and alternative fuels are the leading measures. Efficiency in your operation and equipment is the easiest, least expensive and fastest way to decarbonize. Fleets have reported 20% emissions reduction through efficiency alone.

Longer-term decarbonization, to reach 2040 and 2050 goals, will rely on next-generation fuels and engines.

[Beyond Fuel: IAATO Sustainability and Emissions Reduction Guidance](#)

In 2025, the IAATO Climate Change Committee created guidance to support members in implementing practical emissions reduction strategies. This resource, *'Beyond Fuel: IAATO Sustainability and Emissions Reduction Guidance'* is available to members and field staff via the IAATO website.

Operational Efficiency Measures

Operational measures are the least expensive but have the potential to reduce emissions by 3-15%. These include optimizing machinery and system operations, such as auxiliary engine loads, auxiliary systems, main engine tuning, steam plant optimization, and turbocharger optimization.

To optimize hydrodynamic and propulsion efficiency, using autopilot, propeller polishing, hull cleaning, trim/draught optimization, and dynamic positioning are effective measures.

Commercial and logistical measures involve optimizing voyages, weather routing, utilizing capacity and fleet, and optimizing speed and port calls to improve efficiency and reduce emissions.

Technical Efficiency Measures

Technical measures are more costly, may add complexity, and increase the need for training but have the potential to reduce emissions by 5-30%. In machinery and systems, the use of autotuning, waste heat recovery, variable engine speed (Aux), exhaust gas boilers, variable frequency drivers, and PTO/PTI De-rating can significantly enhance performance.

Propulsion efficiency can be improved by using ducts, fins, high-efficiency rudder, and propeller design/retrofit. For hydrodynamic efficiency enhancement, using air lubrication, hull paint, hull form modifications, bulbous bow, and deadweight increase are recommended.

Incorporating alternative energy sources, such as shore power, onboard CCS, WAPS, batteries, fuel cells, and efficient lighting, can further reduce emissions. Energy-saving and operation-monitoring solutions, including decision support, remote monitoring, and performance management, are also essential.



Commercial and Logistical Efficiency Measures

Introducing commercial and logistical measures will have a business impact and has the potential to reduce emissions by 0-20%.

Alternative Fuels

The most cost-demanding measure is the introduction of alternative fuels. These include fuels without carbon or with sustainable carbon capture, such as CO₂ from combustion, biofuels, methanol, ammonia, or nuclear. In this case, availability and price will drive the fuel selection. Using alternative fuels has the potential to reduce emissions by up to 100%.

IAATO's Climate Change Committee and Antarctic Gateway Committee are working together to understand alternative fuel availability at Antarctic gateways. It is important that these fuels are sourced sustainably and reduce more GHG than CO₂ alone. While still limited in more remote areas, elsewhere biofuel is becoming more widely available and demand is growing. It is compatible with most existing diesel engines and will give you immediate emission reduction, but at a cost.

Some IAATO operators are testing biofuels, looking at adding 10-30% biofuel into their diesel mix for a 10-30% emission reduction. Bunker agents are looking to supply biofuel in South America within the next few years. Major bunker companies can supply information on the biofuels market and help with customizing a strategy suitable for an Operator's operational pattern, budget and GHG reduction targets. For example, until alternative fuels become more available at remote gateways, vessels can still reduce their overall emissions by filling tanks at ports with biofuel or other low carbon fuels before their repositioning voyage.

Biofuel is considered a *short-term* solution for shipping and aviation and not long-term because costs are anticipated to increase, and there is not expected to be enough biofuel for global shipping and aviation to reach Net Zero 2050 (*source DNV*).

Decarbonization Resources

Energy Efficiency Measures / Guidance from IMO includes the formulation of the Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP) – this is your ship-specific plan for vessel operators.

UNCC e-learning course (Introductory Course on energy efficiency in shipping)

GreenVoyage 2050 <https://greenvoyage2050.imo.org/>

Successful decarbonization actions that IAATO operators are already implementing:

- Reduction in fuel use through itinerary planning, hull cleaning, and hull modification.
- Reduction of energy use on board through efficiency in air-conditioning, lights, and galley operations.
- Charter of more fuel-efficient craft (eg vessel, vehicle, aircraft).
- Sustainable Aviation Fuel, energy-efficient aircraft, flight path efficiency, filling aircraft by collaborating.
- Reduction of fuel use for the generation of electricity in deep field camps and on vessels by exploring lower carbon and alternative fuel sources, wind and solar.

Spread the Word!

- Share our Pledge (your web, passenger information, marketing material, social media, press release, etc.)
- Share your Climate Strategy Journey
- Invite suppliers to align with our pledge and create a climate strategy
- Continue to engage with better environmental practices in terms of plastics reductions, bio-security, supply chain engagement
- Support passengers to calculate their carbon footprints and set reduction targets
- Utilize the IAATO Antarctic Ambassadorship support materials
- Promote Antarctic Ambassadors
- Distribute IAATO Climate Change materials as they emerge.



COMMUNICATING THE ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE

| A guide for IAATO Member communications,
sales and marketing teams

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

“Working together to safeguard the Antarctic environment”

As a member of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO), you and your company are part of a unique association of more than 100 members who are committed to the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector Antarctic travel.

Since 1991, the IAATO membership has been successfully working together to safeguard the Antarctic environment by developing a wealth of operational procedures and requirements in support of the Antarctic Treaty System and other international protocols.

IAATO itself doesn't promote travel to Antarctica, but its member companies do. As polar communicators, you play a vital role in helping the association achieve its mission by managing clients' expectations regarding their Antarctic experience.

Effective communication is the cornerstone of any successful public relations strategy. For communications, marketing and sales teams working on behalf of IAATO members, the challenge with communicating the Antarctic experience is twofold: to represent your company's interests and support the fulfilment of its commercial aspirations, while simultaneously reflecting the values and objectives of IAATO and the tenets of the Antarctic Treaty to which we all adhere. This dual responsibility requires a nuanced approach that balances consistency with personalisation, credibility with creativity, and proactive engagement with reactive management.

This Communicating the Antarctic Experience guide is designed to equip IAATO member communications, marketing, and sales teams with the insights necessary to navigate this sometimes-complex landscape. By adhering to best practices and leveraging strategic frameworks, you can ensure that every message not only resonates with your company's intended audience but also strengthens the reputation of your organisation, IAATO and the industry. This guide provides foundational principles and practical tips tailored specifically for the unique environment of responsible Antarctic tourism.

With a focus on clarity, coherence, and collaboration, Communicating the Antarctic Experience aims to enhance the effectiveness of your communications efforts, ensuring that every interaction supports the IAATO ethos while highlighting the Antarctic experience and unique selling points your company has to offer. Whether you are managing media relations, crafting compelling content or sharing the wonders of Antarctica with would-be guests before they book, this guide will serve as a valuable resource in your pursuit of excellence in responsible polar communications.

2.0 MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

When expectations are clearly defined and communicated, they minimise misunderstandings and foster a sense of trust and transparency between guests and field staff during expeditions. Setting realistic expectations ahead of their visit helps prevent guest disappointment and - worse - resentment, both of which can lead to non-compliance in the field and the onerous task of damage control for already busy field staff and crew.

Effective expectation management is a key component in fostering mutual respect, clear communication, and overall satisfaction of expedition guests, leading to open, agreeable, and amenable interactions. Here are some ways to achieve it:

COMMUNICATE EXPECTATIONS EARLY

By introducing your expectations in the early stages of the guest relationship you can help establish consistent standards. For example, for the 2024-25 season, with the threat of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI), it was noted by members that early communication regarding the potential risk to wildlife and the necessary protocols to avoid its spread, helped set expectations and facilitated the role the field staff needed to deliver on board.

Sales and social media teams working on behalf of IAATO members have reported an increase in requests for guests to bring Remotely Piloted Aircraft system or RPAS (also known as drones) to Antarctica with them. There are very specific protocols around drone use in the region, the most important of which is that commercial RPAS flights are not allowed in coastal areas unless the activity is covered by the IAATO Operator's permit/authorisation and/or the RPAS pilot has approval from the IAATO Operator with whom they are traveling, regardless of any personal authorisation they may have.

In addition:

- Recreational RPAS flights are not allowed in coastal areas;
- Members who conduct RPAS flights should have Standard Operating Procedures in place that are specific to RPAS operation;
- Any use of RPAS must be included in the operator's permit/authorisation conditions e.g. Advance Notification, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Waste Management Permit (WMP), where relevant.



Check whether your guest's expedition has the correct authorisations in place to avoid misunderstandings.

Remember, unrealistic guest expectations can place enormous pressure on Expedition Leaders and Captains, which could result in poor management decisions. This situation is avoidable – and early engagement with would-be guests is key to preventing it.

2.0 | MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

| TRANSPARENCY

Referring to certain locations as ‘must see’ or including specific sites in an itinerary can give visitors the impression that they are guaranteed to see those things. In reality, Antarctica’s sometimes temperamental weather, ice movements and other factors may prohibit it once the expedition is underway. Instead offer an overview of the expedition. Be transparent about the challenging and sometimes uncertain nature of the Antarctic to help build trust and manage guest and potential guest expectations realistically.

Antarctica presents itself in many ways; from crisp and cloudless ‘blue bird’ days to dark dramatic ones and everything in between. Consider using images showcasing the many moods of the region. After all, whatever the weather, your guests are still promised an authentic Antarctic experience.

“Following responsible practices and site etiquette will emphasize their Antarctic experience”



| POSITIVE FRAMING

When it comes to communicating the protocols in place for visitors to Antarctica, communicating information in a positive way can enhance understanding and compliance among your guests. Move the focus away from what guests are not allowed to do in the region and instead promote how following responsible practices and site etiquette will emphasize their Antarctic experience by making them part of protecting the region. This approach not only fosters a sense of personal fulfilment and inspires guests to participate in responsible tourism efforts – especially guidance that is new to the season - rather than focusing solely on restrictions.

Positive framing also helps with managing expectations around landings. For example, cancelled landings are part of the authentic Antarctic experience, so your Expedition Leader colleagues always consider alternative activities. These “Plan B” options can be just as, if not more, memorable than Plan A.

2.0 | MANAGING EXPECTATIONS



| DON'T BE AFRAID TO REPEAT YOURSELF

Reinforce expectations with guest reminders during the pre-expedition preparation process. Whether you work in sales, guest experience or on the social media team, don't be afraid to repeat yourself or correct misconceptions as you become aware of them. It's better to clarify with a guest before their expedition than have a member of field staff have to manage their disappointment during it

| EMERGING ISSUES

IAATO Members are united in their commitment to operate in the region safely and with environmental responsibility at the heart of all expeditions. This can mean updating IAATO's Operational Procedures to reflect emerging environmental and/or safety issues.

For example, since 2021, the increasing intensity of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreaks around the world has resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of seabirds. Marine mammals, including seals and sea lions, have also been affected.

Concerned about HPAI reaching Antarctica with devastating impacts on the continent's unique wildlife*, the Antarctic community, including IAATO Operators, came together to collectively respond to the threat of avian influenza.

In consultation with the SCAR Antarctic Wildlife Health Working Group (AWHWG), additional protocols were introduced to IAATO's standard biosecurity procedures for 2022-23. These protocols have since evolved and are mandatory for all IAATO Operators and their staff and crew operating in Antarctica.

It is vital that visitors to Antarctica continue to observe HPAI protocols and see these practices reflected in your expedition literature. Images you use in sales and marketing materials, on social media and on your company websites should reflect a minimum distance of 5 metres/15 feet between guests and Antarctic Wildlife and where possible, materials should not carry images from previous seasons where guests are seen to be sitting, kneeling, crouching, or lying down on the ground or snow, or leaving any equipment on the ground or snow, close to animal activity such as nests or breeding adults, pathways, haul out sites and faecal matter.

*On February 24, 2024, the first confirmed case of HPAI was detected on the Antarctic continent.

2.0 | MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

Communications, Marketing and Sales teams should be aware of updates to operational procedures so that contemporary practices can be accurately reflected in your company's public-facing materials. There are two ways to stay updated to ensure your materials reflect the current requirements for visiting Antarctica responsibly:

- Ask the operational contact within your company or the company you provide marketing services for, for the latest seasonal guidance.
- Check out the Preparing for Your Antarctic Expedition page at [IAATO.org](https://www.iaato.org) for any emerging issues or requirements we are sharing with would-be visitors.
- Ahead of the Antarctic season, consider taking the IAATO Online Assessment for Home Office Staff to refresh your memory on current protocols.

| HOLD YOURSELF AND OTHERS ACCOUNTABLE

Consistency is essential for effective expectation management so it is worth having seasonal updates with your communications, marketing, and sales staff to ensure they are aware of how seasonal guidance or emerging issues may have altered the Antarctic experience. If your company uses third-party marketing or sales staff, it's important to ensure they are also aware of the importance of setting realistic expectations among guests.





3.0 COMPLIANCE & ADVOCACY

| ADHERE TO PROTOCOLS

Ensure all marketing activities and materials comply with your company's national competent authority, Antarctic Treaty and IAATO protocols regarding tourism and environmental protection in the region.

In Antarctica, there are certain protocols that must be followed to protect the environment, many developed by IAATO. These include:

- Not disturbing wildlife on land or at sea.
- No more than 100 visitors ashore at any one time.
- A minimum actively guiding staff-to-visitor ratio of up to 1:20 while ashore.
- No landings from ships carrying more than 500 passengers.
- No more than a minor or transitory impact on the environment.

The text and images in your marketing materials should reflect these protocols.

| ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES

Support and advocate for the policies that protect Antarctica and promote responsible tourism. Share facts about the Antarctic Treaty System to help give your guests and would-be guests context and insight into why protocols exist and why it's essential they're followed in the field. This will help create buy-in from your guests and build investment in responsible practices when they're in the field.

4.0 USING IMAGES RESPONSIBLY

Using images and video that reflect the contemporary Antarctic experience is essential not only in managing the expectations of your would-be guests, but also in reflecting your company's commitment, as a member of IAATO, to responsible tourism.

In this section we address some of the mainstays of responsible image use as well as other considerations in the changing landscape of Antarctic tourism.

| AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION

Use images and video that accurately depict the destination's current state without over-embellishment. Check that the wildlife shown in images and video occurs in the area of Antarctica that you are marketing. For example, don't show king penguins unless you know the tour is visiting South Georgia. King penguins are rarely seen on the Antarctic Peninsula.

Avoid using images and video of emperor penguins next to tour information unless the expedition is specifically planning to visit an emperor penguin colony.

Request feedback from company experts, such as biologists or the company's field staff personnel, to ensure marketing materials are as accurate as possible.

| SHOW RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR

Include images and video of tourists engaging in environmentally responsible and respectful practices. Ensure people are wearing appropriate clothing and safety equipment. Use caution showing people in or near crevasses/ice caves.

Check that people or vessels and small boats do not appear on or too close to glaciers or icebergs. Ice can disintegrate or move at any moment posing a significant safety risk, so it's important not to give the impression that this behaviour is permitted. There are specific protocols in place regarding safe practices around ice.

Images taken from a distance or a small boat below a tall glacier with a long lens can also make it appear like guests can touch the glacier front even though they might be 400m away. Protocols exist providing best practice for operations in the vicinity of ice, so again just check that your images reflect this.

4.0 | USING IMAGES RESPONSIBLY



When using images or video in expedition brochures, newsletters, on your company website or social media, please:

- Check that guests and staff or their clothing/equipment do not look too close to wildlife. The minimum distance is 5m/15ft on shore.
- Consider emerging issues and adjust image choices to reflect new guidelines. For example, for the 2024-25 season, you wouldn't use images of guests kneeling, crouching, sitting, or lying down close to wildlife areas in Antarctica or the sub-Antarctic islands due to HPAI (avian influenza) protocols.
- Check that images do not imply that vessels such as kayaks, other small boats and ships are too close to seals and whales. Familiarise yourself with the IAATO Operational Procedures for Whale, Seal & General Wildlife Watching in the Visitor Guidelines Library at iaato.org.protocols.
- Images should not imply that aircraft are too close to wildlife. The minimum distance for aircraft from wildlife is 610m/2000ft above and 930m/1/2 nautical mile when landed. Review ATCM Resolution 2 (2004) - Air Operations Near Birds for further, detailed information.

Antarctic wildlife will sometimes choose to approach human visitors out of curiosity. If an image/video depicts this behaviour, use supporting text to explain that the animal has chosen to move closer to the people/vessels/vehicles being shown.

Check seals do not have their heads raised looking at people or vessels, particularly if their jaws are open, as this implies they have been disturbed. If in doubt, check with company experts.

| DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

Highlight different aspects of the region, including landscapes, wildlife, and camp (deep field) or vessel-based activities, to provide a comprehensive view of the Antarctic experience. If your company has a vessel-based operation which allows for site landings, use small boat cruise images to reflect an alternative experience. This will assist with managing guest expectations should landings be cancelled due to weather conditions or other environmental factors.

4.0 | USING IMAGES RESPONSIBLY



| CLEAR CONTEXT

Provide captions and context for images to manage expectations and educate viewers about the importance of conservation.

Camera lenses used or the perspective from which an image is taken can create the impression that wildlife, icebergs, etc., are closer than they are – sometimes suggesting guidelines have been breached.

Before selecting an image or video for use in marketing materials, ask yourself:

- Does the image reflect my company and IAATO's safe and environmentally responsible ethos to the wider public?
- Can the image be misunderstood (or even wilfully misinterpreted) by someone who is not familiar with our operations or working environment?
- Does my image or video need detailed context to be received in the way my company intends it?
- If my image or video was shared without explanatory text, could that give a different impression of events? (See also 7.0 Problematic guest images).



TIP: When working with travel agents or other tour operators and wholesalers who book your trips, please ensure they are aware of the recommendations shown within this document for their own marketing and PR.

5.0 PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Responsible communication is the heart of any effective sustainability strategy. By delivering honest, accurate and consistent messaging, communicators can help foster a reputation of transparency and an authentic commitment to Antarctic stewardship for their company.

| SUSTAINABILITY

Greenwashing has become a growing concern within the corporate landscape with buzzwords and vagaries making it easier for unscrupulous organisations to latch on to consumer appetite to buy products or engage in practices that are sensitive to the environment. For this reason, it is crucial that sustainability claims are specific and accurate. Vague language, intentional or otherwise, can lead to claims of greenwashing, undermining your company's genuine, committed efforts to environmental responsibility.

For something to be considered sustainable, it should consider the three pillars of sustainability: social, environmental, and economic. While within the responsible tourism sector, as with others, there's a strong focus on mitigating environmental impacts, it can be easy to overlook the impact on people and the economy, which go hand in hand with the environment to create true sustainability. Put simply, if you are talking about environmentally sustainable practices specifically in your communications and marketing materials, make that clear.

Greenwashing: the act or practice of making a product, policy, activity, etc., appear to be more environmentally friendly or less environmentally damaging than it really is

| GUIDELINES FOR GUESTS

Provide clear guidelines on how guests can minimise their impact, such as waste management and respecting wildlife. IAATO has developed supporting resources to communicate visitor obligations while they are in Antarctica, from posters reflecting the latest wildlife watching operational protocols to Don't Pack a Pest biosecurity guidelines. These can be found in the Visitor Guidelines Library, and the IAATO Field Operations Manual at iaato.org.

6.0 ANTARCTIC AMBASSADORSHIP

Naturalist, writer, and broadcaster
Sir David Attenborough said:

“No one will protect what they don’t care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced.”

Antarctic Ambassadorship exemplifies this ethos.



It's IAATO'S belief that Antarctic expeditions with responsible and robust environmental practices at their core create among visitors a greater understanding of the environment, Antarctica's value to global science and how changes to the region can impact us all. This is why responsible travel can create Antarctic Ambassadors, advocates for Antarctica.

ANTARCTIC AMBASSADOR EXPEDITION PROGRAM

IAATO's Antarctic Ambassadorship Committee began developing the Antarctic Ambassador Expedition Program foundation pack in 2023 with the following objectives:

- To create ready-to-use program materials which can be reviewed, easily interpreted, and delivered by polar field staff to their guests.
- Flexibility within the materials to enable IAATO Operators to adjust the program for specific settings, i.e., lectures, re-caps.
- Consistency of message across the membership about the Antarctic Ambassador concept and its aims.

The resulting materials were soft launched at the start of the 2023-24 Antarctic season, enabling field staff to test the materials and provide feedback to broaden the program in 2024-25. These materials are as follows:

- Program Presentation
- Expedition Challenge
- Certificate of Antarctic Ambassadorship

If your company runs the Antarctic Ambassador Expedition Program, prepare guests for this activity by talking about the ambassador concept and how the responsible actions they take during their trip are acts of ambassadorship in themselves.

6.0 | ANTARCTIC AMBASSADORSHIP



| AMBASSADORSHIP FOR COMMERCIAL GAIN

IAATO makes the Antarctic Ambassador logo freely available to members for the creation of stickers and patches that can be used to incentivise guest engagement in the Antarctic Ambassador Expedition Program. These Ambassador patches and stickers should not be promoted for sale; they should not be sold in vessel gift shops or on company websites, although they can form part of a charity auction if that charity benefits Antarctica or the sub-Antarctica.

| ONWARD AMBASSADORSHIP

IAATO has an Antarctic Ambassadors community on Instagram and Facebook as well as resources and activities on its website for polar enthusiasts to continue their ambassadorship journey. These resources are available [here](#) to download and share among your own audiences to promote ambassadorship during expedition and from home.

7.0 CORRECTING MISINFORMATION

In an age where information spreads rapidly via social media, the consequences of misinformation - whether shared in good faith or maliciously - are amplified, potentially causing your company and the wider industry harm and necessitating damage control efforts.

In the first instance, you should always refer to your company guidelines on correcting misinformation or seeking clarifications. However, if this information is not included within your in-house procedures or you're asked to seek further advice from IAATO by your senior leaders, you may find the following best practices useful in supporting your decision-making and/or creating your own guidance.

| ONWARD AMBASSADORSHIP

For the most part, misinformation whether shared by a reporter or your online communities is accidental or certainly shared in good faith, and so a light touch is all that is needed.

6.0 | CORRECTING MISINFORMATION

SEEKING CLARIFICATION FROM A JOURNALIST OR PUBLICATION

If you notice an inaccuracy in an article and wish to seek a correction from a journalist, often the sooner you reach out, the better the chances of correcting the information before it spreads further.

- Clearly identify the error in the article, providing specific details like the date of publication, the headline, and the exact passage that contains the mistake.
- Explain why the information is incorrect and provide the correct facts, backed by evidence or credible sources.
- Start with a tone that assumes the error was unintentional, which is often the case.
- If you are an expert or have access to better information, offer to help the journalist understand the issue better. This can involve providing documents, offering an interview, or connecting them with other credible sources.

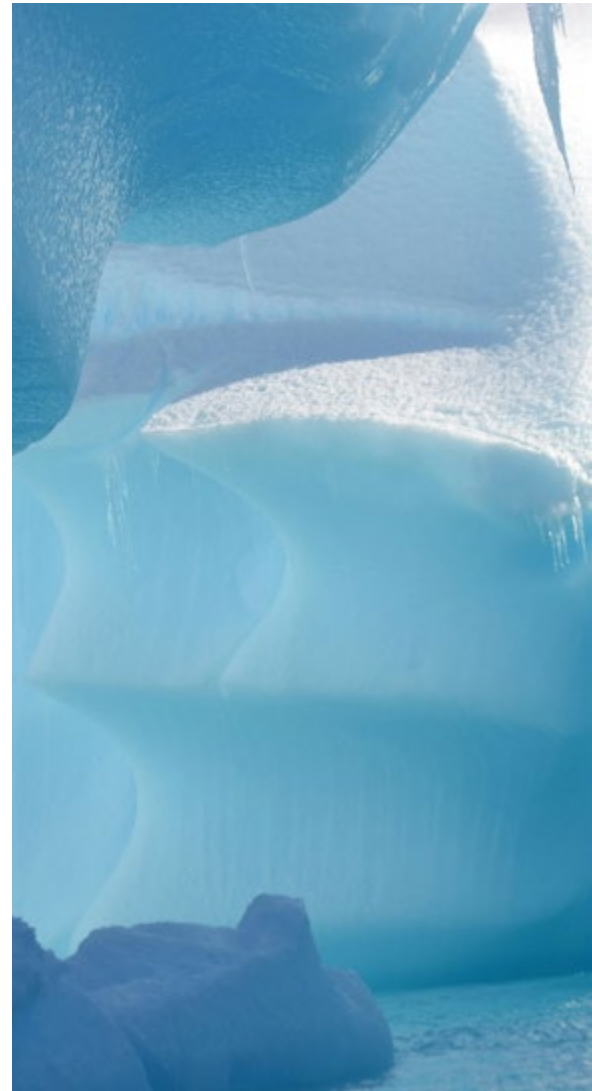
Other things you may wish to consider include:

RESPONDING TO SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

If something is misleading but doesn't inherently create any risk to managing future guest expectations or company reputation, then it may be wise not to invest too much energy in offering context or correction. The same goes for content generated by social media groups such as those engaged in Antarctica-related disinformation or hoax theories. Your efforts will ultimately be wasted, as facts, whether provided by science or exploration, simply aren't welcomed by those focused on the idea of a conspiracy.

RESPONDING NOT REACTING

When faced with a frustrating falsehood or seemingly unfounded criticism, do not be defensive or argue. If unsure about how to respond to negative media, social media comments or posts, please check with your senior managers or, if the misinformation is relevant, reach out to IAATO (communications@iaato.org).



TIP: Creating a standard operating procedure (SOP) for what your organisation constitutes a problematic post will help create a consistent approach to addressing misinformation across your communications and marketing teams. If you have any questions for IAATO on this topic, please contact the IAATO Communications Team via communications@iaato.org.

6.0 | CORRECTING MISINFORMATION

| PROBLEMATIC GUEST PICTURES

Where social media images or videos are problematic, reaching out to the poster and acknowledging that as someone who clearly loves Antarctica as [insert company here] does, you know they would not intend to encourage behaviour which could negatively impact the region and/or its wildlife, however the image they have posted could be misinterpreted.

Well-meaning people will be very quick to remove the image and repost an alternative with greater, useful context.

If your company becomes aware of a post or article that you feel could reflect negatively on the industry as a whole, please feel free to contact IAATO via our Care & Concern process: careandconcern@iaato.org and ask us to review it.

| PROMOTING CONTENT AS COMMENT

One tactic your social media team may find helpful is sharing video explainers, FAQs, and blogs as a way of correcting misinformation or sharing your company's perspective. For example, where IAATO has seen common misconceptions posted about tourism in Antarctica, it has used its Antarctic Ambassadors platform to post its "Don't hug the penguins and other rules in Antarctica" blog in the comments. This cuts down on time crafting individual responses, and often users will take it upon themselves to share the link further which leads to comment sections self-correcting and creating community. It's an engaging, entertaining way of informing people without being seen to proselytise or lecture.

| SOMETIMES SILENCE SPEAKS VOLUMES

Misinformation should be corrected, clearly and logically, when required. In some circumstances, for example, where a commenter is intentionally trying to antagonise, it is best to ignore a comment to avoid giving it attention or unwarranted credibility.



8.0 CONCLUSION

As polar communicators, we all have a responsibility to authentically present the Antarctic experience, to minimise non-compliance by managing expectations and setting standards among guests at the earliest opportunity and to support our colleagues in the field by conveying the obligation each guest has to visit responsibly.

By following these guidelines, you, as a professional in the Antarctic tourism sector, can effectively communicate the unique approach IAATO members have to visiting this fragile wilderness and inspire among visitors the desire to join them.

For questions and feedback about this and any other IAATO communications guidance, email the IAATO Communications Team at communications@iaato.org

Find all available communications resources in the Member Resources section on the IAATO website.

IAATO.

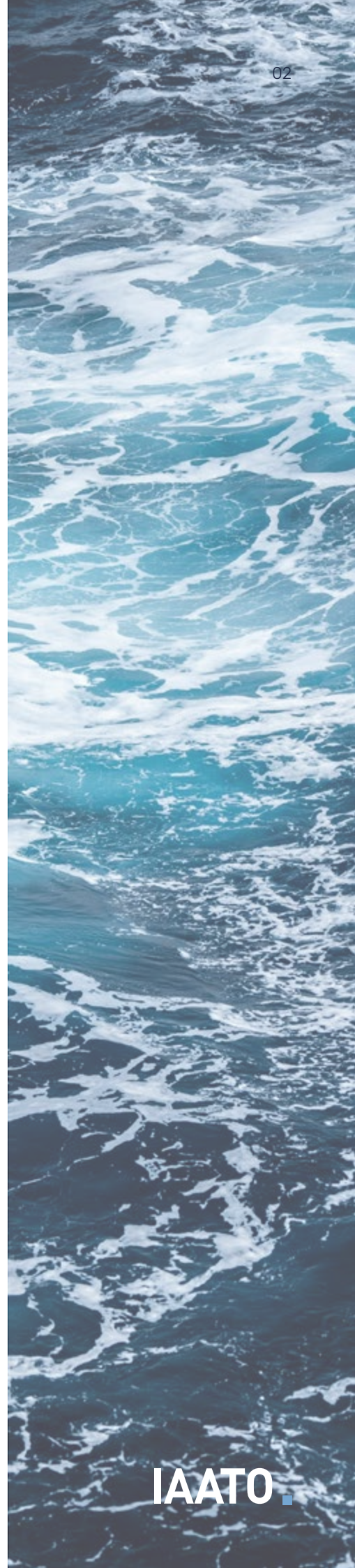
IAATO.ORG

TRAVELLING WITH INFLUENCERS

| A guide for IAATO Operators

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INTRODUCTION

It may surprise you that the concept of “Influencers” has existed since 1760, when potter Josiah Wedgwood created a tea set for England’s Queen Charlotte and began publicising himself as the “Potter of her Majesty.” This title and the royal stamp of approval turned his products into must-haves and cemented Wedgwood as the father of modern marketing.

The rise of social media platforms is responsible for influencers as we know them today. In the early 2010s, social media breathed new life into influencer marketing, with individuals suddenly able to reach vast numbers of people with little effort.

Your company may have worked with carefully selected influencers to promote your products and encourage audience engagement on behalf of your business. Still, more often than not, your involvement with influencers is when they travel with you as guests.

These influencers are not working on your behalf and have no agreement regarding the content they will generate or what they will share with their audiences. You might not even know who they are.

As we have seen in recent years, issues can arise when the desire for clicks, likes, and views leads to non-compliance with the operational standards we set.

This guidance aims to assist IAATO Operators in identifying the specific needs of influencer guests and helping them achieve their aims without compromising their obligation to visit responsibly.

Some images and examples featured within the document have been included with the kind permission of IAATO members for education.

WHAT IS AN INFLUENCER?

Influencers have established a significant online presence and hold sway over a dedicated audience. They typically operate across social media, blogs, or other content-sharing channels.

| CONTRACTED VS NON-CONTRACTED

While brands can employ influencers to market products, offers, or experiences to their audiences, they can also create non-sponsored content developed without a brand agreement, support, or control.

| INFLUENCER, CELEBRITY – OR BOTH?

Not all influencers are celebrities, and not all celebrities are influencers. Unlike celebrities with broader appeal, influencers often build their reputation by focusing on specific interests or demographics and being experts in those areas. However, it is possible to be both!

| ACTOR AND ACTIVIST

Academy Award-winning actor Javier Bardem is an environmental activist and has used his platform to call for Marine Protected Areas in Antarctica on behalf of Greenpeace. He is considered a Celebrity Influencer. While high-profile guests do not necessarily generate content with any specific marketing aim, large audiences often follow their activities due to their significant online following and enduring interest in their lives. For that reason, we've included them in this guidance.



BENEFITS



Videos like this one on TikTok help promote responsible tourism.

CONTRACTED VS NON-CONTRACTED

Having influencers on your expedition - whether contracted by you or not - can help Antarctica reach a broader, engaged audience, boosting awareness of the White Continent and how you, as a responsible Operator, create enriching, educational experiences for visitors.

AUTHENTICITY

Followers trust influencers more than traditional marketing, even more so when they aren't paid to share.

CREATIVE CONTENT

Influencers excel at creating engaging content that aligns with a brand's message and values. In this TikTok video (pictured), a travel influencer introduces IAATO and shares her Operator's biosecurity process, earning 1.9m views.

PROMOTING AMBASSADORSHIP

Influencers and celebrity guests can be strong ambassadors for Antarctica and have the platform to encourage others to do the same! Engaging influencers in the Antarctic Ambassador Expedition Programme can add value to their content and promote Ambassadorship.



CHALLENGES

LIMITED CONTROL

Operators may have limited control over the content influencers or celebrity guests create, which could result in misalignment with brand values.

Actor Zoey Deutch shared this image (right) on Instagram in 2023, when sitting, kneeling, and lying down near wildlife in Antarctica was prohibited due to avian influenza protocols. The image was picked up by media and published worldwide, viewed by more than 1 million people.



Celebrity rule-breakers are more likely to have their errors shared with a wider audience.



Evolving rules can mean some images don't age well and shouldn't be shared year after year.

NEGATIVE PERCEPTION

Influencers may not be aware of the need for added context when sharing specific images (i.e. taken before a protocol change or activities permitted with special authorisation). This can lead to backlash from well-meaning audiences if they assume they are witnessing broken rules.

When Greenpeace first shared this image of actor and activist Javier Bardem (above), laying down on landing sites was not prohibited. However, through today's lens, followers could (understandably) assume the actor had broken the rules.

CHALLENGES

NON-COMPLIANCE

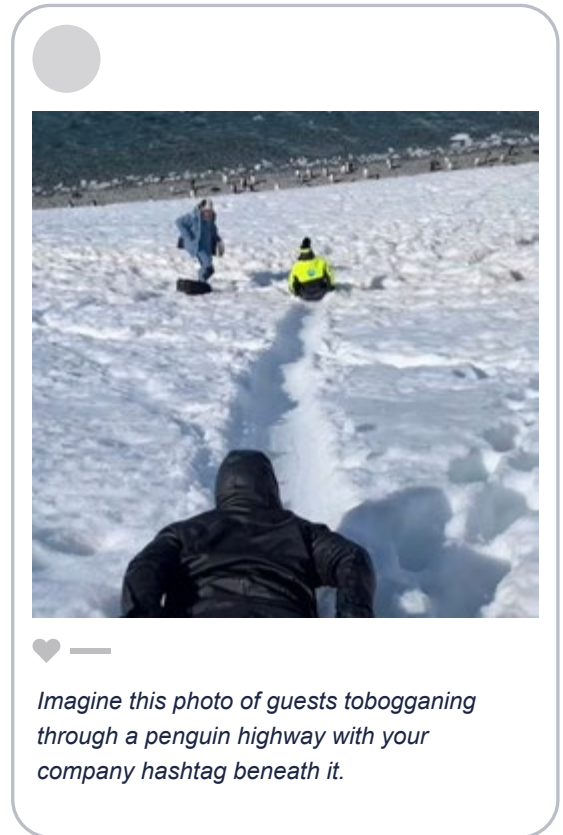
Influencers constantly battle to create superior content to their competitors. This can mean they resort to pushing boundaries, which could lead to non-compliance (below).

HEIGHTENED SCRUTINY

For as long as there have been influencers and celebrities, there have been influencer and celebrity misdeeds, and with that comes a level of attention, scrutiny and ultimately, infamy the average person can only imagine. Intentional or not, high-profile rule-breakers can cause a PR crisis for the Operator they are travelling with and reputational damage for the industry.



Imagine this photo of a guest standing on a historic relic in your company's parka.



Imagine this photo of guests tobogganing through a penguin highway with your company hashtag beneath it.



RECOGNISING INFLUENCER GUESTS

Unlike Contracted Influencers, non-contracted influencers (influencer guests) have no formal agreement with you. They may be generating content to be monetised via their social channels or for another brand.

This can add additional pressure to staff if they need to know they have an influencer travelling with them ahead of time. In extreme cases, this could divert resources to manage or mind the guest or guests in question.

So, how can your staff recognise an influencer?

| HOLIDAY SNAP OR A PHOTOSHOOT?

Influencers require a lot of material to select and edit their final content so that they may take more photos than the average guest. Most guests will focus on snapping wildlife and vistas, while influencers will also be focused on creating high-quality images and footage in which they are heavily featured.

| VIDEO, VIDEO AND MORE VIDEO

For influencers, video is king, so guests' storytelling to the camera and re-recording may create more than personal memories.

| GOOGLE IS YOUR FRIEND!

Career influencers will have a significant online presence, so a quick search of their name should bring up their socials.

A critical factor in determining someone's influence on social media is the size and engagement of their following.

TOP TIP!

The more followers, likes, comments, and shares they have, the more likely to be considered an influencer.

CREATING AN INFLUENCER STRATEGY

Influencers can influence audience behaviour and brand perception in today's digitally driven world. They are trusted voices within their respective niches, able to influence audience decisions and drive engagement with authenticity and reach.

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

Consider developing a strategy to outline how your company will engage with influencers. A well-defined plan will ensure that you forge paid partnerships with purpose and authenticity and that your field staff can swiftly identify influencers travelling with you as guests and optimise opportunities to support and guide them.

Before we move on to what to include in an Influencer Brief, first let's share the benefits of having one:

INTRODUCES YOUR BRAND

It's beneficial for any influencer, contracted or otherwise, to know who you are, what you do, and your values (and IAATOs!). It will help inspire their content and provide helpful information to answer their followers' questions.

SETS EXPECTATIONS

Briefings are an opportunity to share unambiguous standards and expectations for those you work with, helping to avoid issues in the field.

ENCOURAGES QUESTIONS EARLY

A well-thought-out briefing can anticipate and answer questions about the expedition, your company - and the rules! Your Influencer Brief will give them something to refer to and reduce follow-up questions.

REINFORCES GUIDELINES

Provide influencers with helpful guidelines and expectations for the content they create and their behaviour on landings when taking photographs and filming.

FOCUSES EFFORTS

An influencer could create a wealth of different content in Antarctica. A detailed briefing will help them identify concepts and opportunities early on and give them direction.

ESTABLISHES CLEAR OBJECTIVES

Define your goals as the Operator and how you intend to support the influencer in achieving their aims while honouring operational protocols.

TOP TIP!

Your Influencer Brief should reflect whether you're in a contract with the influencer or they are just travelling with you as a guest.

CREATING INFLUENCER STRATEGY

If they have questions, a briefing allows them to ask them early, reducing the risk of confusion and misunderstandings later. Managing guests under pressure to meet content goals for their trip can be challenging. Help mitigate against issues arising:

CREATE AN INFLUENCER INFO SHEET

Influencers might only make themselves known to Operators after travelling, so consider creating an Influencer Information Sheet or page on your website.

An information sheet can help manage expectations and introduce guidelines regarding behaviour on landings, taking photos, and filming responsibly before they embark on their expedition, alleviating potential pressure on your field staff.

TELL THEM HOW THEY'LL GET CANCELLED

Influencers and big names generally want to do the right thing, so be upfront about what will get them 'cancelled'. Give specific, relevant examples of what to avoid, and consider including this context in your briefings.

REMEMBER THE ENTOURAGE!

Influencers won't always travel alone, and many people, including managers, publicists, agents, friends, and family, will often accompany celebrities.

Communicating with the entourage to understand their needs and motivations is just as crucial as working with your primary guest.

INTRODUCE ANTARCTIC AMBASSADORS

Influencers and celebrity guests can be strong ambassadors for Antarctica and have the platform to encourage others to do the same!

Antarctic Ambassador is an attractive title which suggests trust. It's a privilege to be one to introduce the concept and refer to it throughout their trip.

Use patches and the certificate to acknowledge their support of the rules.



Last but not least:

CRISIS PREPAREDNESS

Have a plan for handling PR crises involving influencers, such as witnessing medevacs or wildlife mass mortality events. Be prepared to respond promptly to any issues that may arise.

ADAPT AND EVOLVE YOUR STRATEGY

Stay flexible and adapt your influencer strategy based on the evolving social media landscape and travel trends. Continuously assess the conduct of influencers and high-profile guests and adjust your guidelines accordingly.

CONTRACTED (PAID) INFLUENCERS

When working with influencers, your chosen content creators must understand who you are, what you seek to achieve by working with them, and how you can fulfil your goals together. An Influencer Brief can help you!

Consider sharing your Influencer Brief with influencers you have established relationships with to gather trusted feedback. Reviewing the brief together is good practice if you're working with someone for the first time. It allows them to ask questions then and there and can be an opportunity to bounce initial ideas around.

Here's what you should include:

| DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

Explain in 2-3 sentences what your company does. Share what's important to you so that the content generated can align. Please provide examples of past campaigns or content you feel works for your brand so your influencers can understand your expectations and what will likely be achievable during their expedition.

This section is an excellent opportunity to discuss Antarctica's unique governance under the Antarctic Treaty and why visiting responsibly is so important.

| CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Provide influencers with a clear understanding of your objectives. Include information about campaign planning and delivery, including 1-2 sentences on:

- **Purpose** - Describe the campaign you envision and its objective.
- **Message** - Specific information to be included in the content.
- **Content review** - Describe the review process so they can get an idea of lead times.

CONTRACTED (PAID) INFLUENCERS

CAMPAIGN DELIVERABLES

Deliverables are the content you want from the influencer and the guidelines within which you want it created.

Setting guidelines around content can still support creativity but also help ensure that the resulting content matches your expectations and your brand's identity.

Campaign deliverables should include:

- **Format & Volume:** (2 x blogs, 10x Instagram reels etc)
- **Description:** Specific guidelines for your influencer.
- **Deadlines:** Allow time for content review!
- **Tips:** Offer advice!
- **Captions:** What key messages should be included in the captions along with hashtags or links?

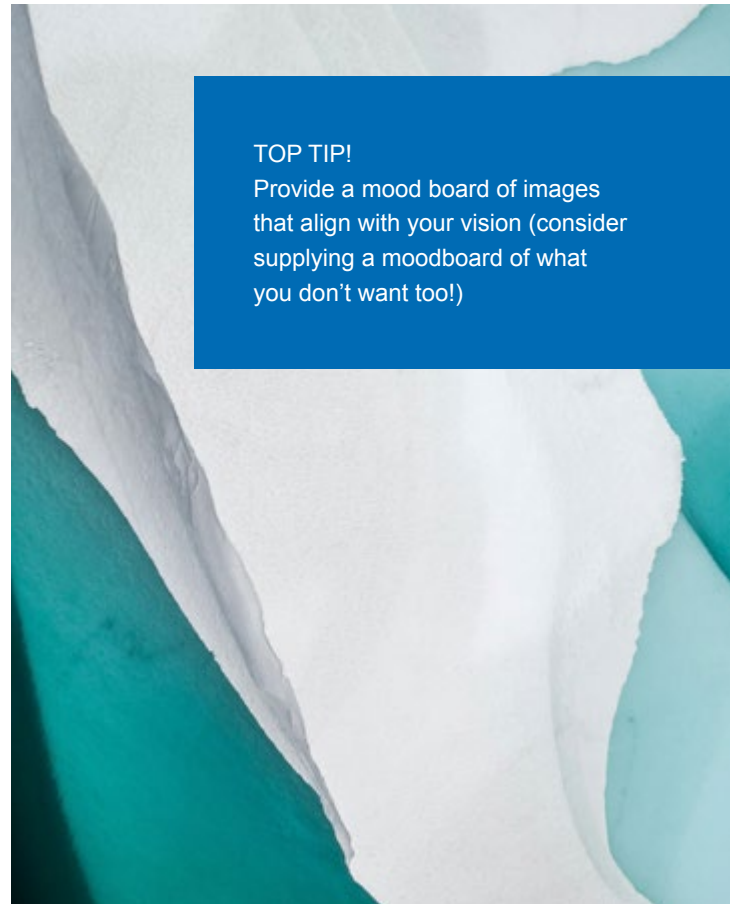
CAMPAIGN DO'S AND DON'TS

Providing specific do's and don'ts will help influencers produce on-brand content. Consider including the following in your Influencer Brief:

✓ DO

- Include campaign messages in the post captions (as specified).
- Submit your content for review.
- Follow Operational Protocols and staff instructions at all times during your expedition.
- Avoid creating images that create the perception that you're closer to wildlife than you are.

Be sure to obtain written confirmation that they have read, understood, and agreed to the document's outlines.



TOP TIP!

Provide a mood board of images that align with your vision (consider supplying a moodboard of what you don't want too!)

✗ DON'T

- Suggest visitors are guaranteed specific wildlife encounters or to visit particular locations
- Use phrases encouraging would-be visitors to see Antarctica "before it's gone/it melts" etc .
- Break operational protocols or guidelines to obtain desired content.

CONCLUSION

Establishing a clear and robust strategy for managing influencer relationships is paramount in today's dynamic digital landscape.

By following the guidance outlined in this document, IAATO Operators can confidently and precisely navigate the intricacies of influencer engagement.

They can work with influencers to educate their audiences about Antarctica and the responsible tourism measures that support its ongoing protection while maintaining brand identity, authenticity, and transparency.

Referring to this guidance and disseminating relevant insights among your expedition staff can encourage teams to forge authentic connections with influencers, fostering mutually beneficial outcomes and protecting the industry's reputation and Antarctica.

#WeAreIAATO

For any questions or feedback, please email
IAATO Communications
at communications@iaato.org

Find all available communications resources in
the Member Resources section on the
IAATO website.



SOURCES & FURTHER READING

Campaign: [History of advertising: No 129: Josiah Wedgwood's Queen's Ware](#)

Indeed: [Step-by-step guide on how to work with influencers](#)

Meltwater: [How to Write an Influencer Brief That Works](#)

Bazaar Voice: [How to write an effective influencer brief](#)

Sprout Social: [What is influencer marketing: An influencer strategy guide for 2024](#)

INFLUENCER BRIEF TEMPLATE

INFLUENCER BRIEF TEMPLATE

COMPANY DETAILS

| COMPANY OVERVIEW:

Explain in 2-3 sentences what your company does. Share what's important to you so that the content generated can align.

INFLUENCER BRIEF TEMPLATE

CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

CAMPAIGN NAME:

Give your campaign a unique and descriptive name for easy reference.

CAMPAIGN DATE:

Estimated date range your campaign will run

BUDGET:

TIMELINE:

Estimated date range to develop the campaign

INFLUENCER BRIEF TEMPLATE

CAMPAIGN DETAILS

OBJECTIVES:

Share the reason behind the campaign

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY:

Describe the campaign, what it will include, how it will be delivered, and the desired outcomes

CHANNELS:

Include all channels that will be used in the campaign. List specific social media networks, media outlets, blogs, names of influencers, etc.

CAMPAIGN DO'S & DON'TS:

Provide specific do's and don'ts to help influencers produce on-brand content

INFLUENCER BRIEF TEMPLATE

DELIVERABLES

Input deliverables as required

Details about deliverables - Person in charge - Deadline for delivery

| IMAGES:

| VIDEOS:

| SOCIAL MEDIA COPY:

| BLOGS:

IAATO.



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