



Escape2

Case Study



VAGABOND

SMALL-GROUP TOURS OF IRELAND

Company

Vagabond Tours

Country

Ireland

Irish Example of

Environmentally Sustainable Tour
Operator

Website

<https://vagabondtoursofireland.com/>



Vagabond have been leaders in small-group tours in Ireland for almost 20 years. Their guided Ireland tours are the perfect recipe of locally owned accommodation, passionate driver guides, top quality Mercedes tour vehicles, delicious food, adventures, outdoors, old castles, scenery and unmissable local Irish experiences.

There are two ways to tour Ireland with Vagabond. Discover their relaxed [Driftwood Journeys of Discovery](#) and active [Vagabond Cultural Adventures](#).

Over the years and throughout their journey environmentally sustainable practices have become increasingly important and relevant to remaining both sustainable and competitive.



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A 2005 survey found that 54 percent of respondents consider environmental issues when booking a trip and 82 percent are willing to pay more for green services and products. As a bonus, some 72 percent of respondents think a green business is more likely to be quality conscious.

2005 Survey



Why was Implementing Environmentally Friendly and Sustainable Practices so **Important** to Vagabond Tours?

It is inherent in all Vagabonds operations and business practices to have a positive impact on the environment, the communities they visit and maintain an amazing guest experience.

Vagabond knew it was important to implement Green Business practices so that they could 'Keep Ireland Beautiful' and ensure they had a reputation of doing good for their business is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable. They wanted their guests to love Ireland as much as they do and respect it as an important environmental resource as well as experience. They knew caring for the Irish environment meant they could stay on top of their customers' evolving needs and expectations particularly those who are environmentally aware and 'climate change' pro-active.

As a result, they set up their very own

Green Office so guests could see how they continue to constantly improve their environmental impact of operations at VagaHQ.

Being a sustainable business has had so many positive outcomes for both the business, the environment and society. It has improved environmental impact, reduced consumption waste, and improved local landscapes, reduced CO2 omissions, conserved energy, and reduced water waste and air pollution.

It has also improved the wellbeing and practices of their staff and customers through education and knowledge exchange. Collectively they feel involved and that they are also minimizing negative impacts. The measures implemented have positively impacted the lives of the local community and the businesses they work.



I believe that high quality tourism experiences require **dedicated environmental certification and awards** to prove to their guests they are held accountable to their processes and procedures.

Interview Rob Rankin with Progressive Ecological Tourism Network



What are the Main Internal & Environmentally Sustainable **Approaches** and Practices You Have Implemented?



Vagabond implemented and adopted several [responsible and sustainable tourism practices](#) and vital tools to help combat the ongoing climate emergency. The core areas they focus on are solar panels, energy usage, water usage, paper usage and general waste, here are a few examples of how they implement these approaches;

1. They created and published their [Declaration](#), Sustainability Mission, [Social and Environmental Policy](#) to demonstrate their commitment and be held accountable.
2. Use a [Climate Care Calculator App](#) to help offset emissions.
3. [Green VagaHQ](#): where they do all their recycling, saving water and energy at the Green Headquarters
4. **Involved Guests in Green Practices:** Guests use Vagabond compost coffee cups in local coffee shops instead of non-recyclable cups. They also give each guest an aluminum water bottle to use instead of single-use plastic bottles, helping to eliminate an estimated 30,000 fewer plastic bottles per year in Ireland.
5. [The Extra Mile](#) they actively educate, practice and promote their guests to go the Extra Mile e.g., litter picking, working with communities, building bird boxes...
6. [Bike To Work scheme](#) Staff are actively supported to cycle to work, providing tax free and e-bikes to their employees
7. Use only jet washing to clean the vehicles and [Lilly's Eco Clean](#) internally and [NoH2O](#) externally. The micro-fiber cloths are washed with [Ecover eco-friendly tablets](#) are stored in washable cloth bags for re-use.

Were There Any **Networks, Collaboration Or Supports** That Helped You On Your Journey?



Vagabond Tours connected with key Irish Environmental **Sustainability Partners**; Birdwatch Ireland, Pure Mile, Trees on the Land, Bike to Work Scheme, Moyee Coffee, Solar Electric

Part of a wider Tourism Partnership Network (Leave No Trace, Trees on the Land, Eco Tourism Ireland...)

They also became part of Climate Care, a non-profit organization which raises awareness of climate change by supporting humanitarian and environmental projects globally.

Vagabond became members of Sustainable Travel Ireland to look for ways to improve the impact of tourism on the environment.

How **Successful** Has It Been?



Vagabond Tours are nationally recognized as a company who endorses environmentally sustainable practices.

1. **Achieved numerous national responsible tourism awards** e.g., Best Environmental Tourism Initiative 2019, Irish Ecotourism Gold Level certification 2017 **More awards**
2. **Became Ireland's First B Certified Tour Company**
3. **Have planted 3000 native trees** – 1 for every passenger helping to offset carbon and promote biodiversity.
4. Preventing over-tourism through small group tours and vehicles using locally owned providers.
5. Save at least 48000 liters of water a year
6. Better reputation getting customers and staff involved in environmentally friendly practices; use ethical coffee, bike to work scheme reducing CO2 omissions, recycle all 100% compostable coffee cups, use eco-friendly cleaning products, green toilets etc.
7. **All information**

