

SONDOR TRAVEL

Annual Sustainability Report

2025 — Baseline Year

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Reference standard: GSTC Tour Operator Standard v3.0 (Criterion A3.1)

Next report: Sondor Annual Sustainability Report 2026 (due Q1 2027)

1. About Sondor Travel

Sondor Travel is Albania's longest-established inbound tour operator, founded in 1991 by Sadik Malaj. Now led by Managing Director Dorien Malaj (second generation), Sondor operates B2B wholesale and direct retail tours across Albania and the Western Balkans, serving international partners including Exodus Travels (UK), Topas (Denmark), Viktors Farmor (Sweden), Spice Road Cycling (Australia), and Saiyu (Japan).

In 2025, Sondor achieved GSTC certification — the first tour operator in Albania to do so. We are also a signatory of the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism and recipient of the UNDP SDG Business Pioneers Award.

Key facts	2025
Founded	1991 (35 years of operation)
Core office staff	6 full-time (100% Albanian nationals)
Tour products	6 multi-day tours across Albania and Western Balkans
Total departures	45 departures tracked
GSTC certification	Certified September 2025 — first in Albania
Glasgow Declaration	Signatory — commitment to net zero tourism by 2050
UNDP SDG Award	SDG Business Pioneers Award recipient

2. Our Sustainability Commitments

Sondor Travel's sustainability strategy is built around four pillars aligned with the GSTC Tour Operator Standard:

Pillar	Our commitment
A — Management	Operate under a documented Sustainability Management System; communicate sustainability to all stakeholders; measure and report annually.
B — Social & Economic	Maximise benefits to local communities; employ 100% local staff; prefer local suppliers; protect staff rights and wellbeing; zero tolerance for exploitation.
C — Cultural	Respect and promote cultural heritage; work with communities to present culture authentically; protect intellectual property and artefacts.
D — Environmental	Minimise carbon emissions; eliminate single-use plastics; protect biodiversity and national parks; apply Leave No Trace principles on all tours.

3. Environmental Performance — 2025 Baseline

2025 is Sondor's first year of systematic environmental monitoring following GSTC certification in September 2025. The data below represents our baseline against which future improvements will be measured.

Carbon Emissions (GSTC D2.1)

KPI	2024 → 2025	Notes / change
Total transport CO ₂	4,706 → 4,122 kg	–12.4%. Corrected via the D3.16b tool (emission factor × distance ×

		participants; all vehicle types).
CO ₂ per participant	14.75 → 14.83 kg	+0.5% — broadly stable.
CO ₂ per person-night	2.07 → 1.91 kg	–7.4% — main efficiency indicator; normalises for both group size and trip length.
Glasgow Declaration	Signatory ✓	Committed to halving emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2050.
Single-use plastics	Zero policy ✓	Eliminated on all tours and in the office.

Energy & Water (GSTC D1.3, D1.4)

Office energy and water are now monitored monthly from utility bills (FSHU/OSHEE electricity; UKT water). 2025 baseline: electricity 615 kWh; water 11 m³. Early-2026 data shows a marked electricity reduction — Jan–Jun 2026 used 253 kWh versus 367 kWh in the same period of 2025 (≈31% lower). The full-year comparison will appear in the 2026 Annual Sustainability Report.

Waste (GSTC D2.4)

KPI	2024 → 2025	Status
Estimated waste generated (all tours)	289.6 → 247.8 kg	–9.5% per person-night (0.127 → 0.115 kg). Based on GSTC 0.2 kg/pax/day estimate.
Office waste — measurement	Not yet measured	Office Waste Guide implemented; quarterly measurement from 2026
Single-use plastics on tours	Zero ✓	Actively eliminated from all tour operations

4. Social & Community Performance — 2025

KPI	2025 Performance
% local staff — core team	100% — all 6 core staff are Albanian nationals
% local guides	100% — all field guides are Albanian nationals with certified culture and mountain expertise
% local accommodation suppliers	100% — all accommodation partners are locally owned Albanian businesses
Community financial contributions	UNDP/every.org donation; 2026: TWR Albania €1,000 + ALO Mik children's camp €220
Community partnerships	Albanian Ornithological Society — biodiversity awareness on applicable departures
Staff training sessions	6 training programmes completed (ref: D3.15/1 Training Plan, June 2025)
Supplier sustainability training	Mindful Session for Suppliers held June 2025 — accommodation and F&B suppliers
Accessibility improvements	Full accessibility package to be implemented: website pages, pre-booking form, guide manual
Employee grievance mechanism	Implemented 2026 — written procedure, confidential email channel, anonymous option

5. Supplier Sustainability — 2025

KPI	2025 Performance
Supplier Due Diligence Policy	Active — v3.8 (March 2025). All suppliers we work with complete sustainability questionnaire.
Supplier Code of Conduct	Distributed to all active suppliers. Communications evidence on file. (from the one that have responded)
Supplier tracking system	Airtable QE base — 773 accommodations + transport/guides/restaurants tracked
Sustainability assessment	D3.8.2 Supplier Assessment Register — annual scoring of key supplier groups
Supplier training	Mindful Session held June 2025 for accommodation and F&B supplier network

6. Cultural Heritage — 2025

Sondor tours visit a range of Albania's most significant cultural and natural heritage sites. Our approach to cultural tourism is guided by GSTC criteria C1–C4 and our Community Engagement Plan (D3.12).

- All guides receive training on Albanian cultural heritage, local traditions, and respectful visitor behaviour.
- Guest briefings are provided before all visits to cultural sites (castles, mosques, churches, archaeological parks).
- Entrance fees are paid at all applicable cultural sites, contributing directly to heritage preservation.
- No sourcing or promotion of illegal artefacts or culturally sensitive items.
- Collaboration with local communities to ensure authentic and respectful cultural presentation.

7. Targets for 2026

Target	Deadline	GSTC Reference
Establish monthly office energy and water baseline tracking	Q2 2026 ✓	D1.3, D1.4
Publish Annual Sustainability Report 2025 on website	Q3 2026	A3.1
Add waste measurement targets (quarterly tracking)	Q3 2026	D2.4
Reduce CO ₂ per person-night year-on-year (2025: -7.4% achieved)	End 2026	D2.1
Maintain 100% local staff and supplier sourcing	Ongoing ✓	B2, B3
Complete GSTC v4.0 transition gap assessment	Post-audit 2026	v4.0 transition
Formalise biodiversity contributions record	Q4 2026	D3.1

8. Stakeholder Feedback

Sondor collects feedback from guests, partners, and suppliers through multiple channels:

- Post-tour guest feedback forms (distributed at end of each tour from our international partners)
- Partner operator feedback (Exodus, Topas, Viktors Farmor, SAIYU annual review)
- Supplier feedback via Mindful Sessions and annual due diligence review
- Sustainability feedback email: incoming@sondortravel.com

Key feedback themes from 2025: high satisfaction with guiding quality and local authenticity; areas for improvement noted in pre-departure information depth and digital communication. Corrective actions implemented: updated pre-trip materials and accessibility information on website to be implemented.

9. Contact & Further Information

For questions about this report or Sondor Travel's sustainability practices:

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This report has been prepared in accordance with GSTC Criterion A3.1 — Annual Sustainability Report. Sondor Travel is certified by UCSL United Certification Systems Limited against the GSTC Tour Operator Standard v3.0.
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Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism — Signatory
UNDP SDG Business Pioneers Award 2025

Managing Director — Dorien Malaj:

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