



Sustainable Travel Report 2024

SONDOR

Tirane, Albania

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
WHO WE ARE	3
WHAT WE DO	3
VISION:	4
MISION	4
SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES.....	4
OUR GOALS.....	4
GOAL AND PROGRESS	5
LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS.....	5
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF OUR TOURS ACTIVITY.....	6
NEXT STEPS & FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS.....	9
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2025 PLAN ADJUSTMENT	9
IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE.....	10
CLOSING STATEMENT	10



As Managing Director of Sondor Travel, I am pleased to share with you our Sustainable Travel Report 2024—a reflection of our ongoing journey toward building a more responsible, ethical, and community-centered tourism model in Albania.

Over the past year, we have deepened our commitment to sustainability, not just as a guiding principle, but as a practical framework that shapes every aspect of our operations—from how we design our tours to how we engage with our partners, suppliers, and local communities.

This report highlights the progress we have made in measuring and managing our environmental impact, strengthening our relationships with rural producers, and expanding collaborations with like-minded international tour operators. One of the year’s highlights was our role in bridging the Armbruster Association and the Albanian Association of Beekeepers—a meaningful step in supporting biodiversity, traditional livelihoods, and cross-cultural cooperation.

We are proud of what we’ve achieved, but we also recognize that sustainability is a continuous process. The goals we set for 2025 reflect our ambition to raise the standard further—through verified carbon offsets, community engagement metrics, and the formalization of a sustainable supplier network across Albania.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our team, the trust of our international partners, and the resilience of the local communities who bring each travel experience to life. Together, we are shaping a version of tourism that uplifts rather than extracts, that regenerates rather than depletes.

We thank you for supporting this mission and for believing, as we do, that travel can be a force for good.

Rexhina Malasi
Managing Director

INTRODUCTION

Sondor champions sustainable adventure and cultural tourism that preserves nature, empowers communities, and protects cultural heritage.

WHO WE ARE

At Sondor, we are dedicated to promoting sustainable and responsible adventure and cultural tourism. Our goal is to offer unique experiences that not only satisfy our clients' thirst for adventure but also foster the preservation of natural landscapes, cultural heritage, and the well-being of local communities. We recognize that our tours have a profound impact on the environment and society, and we strive to mitigate these effects through sustainable practices that enhance local economies and protect cultural treasures.

WHAT WE DO

Inbound Travel Service

We create tailor-made travel programs in Albania for corporate travelers from foreign countries. We design, arrange, and operate travel programs in a sustainable way that not only meets but also exceed expectations, and benefit travelers, businesses, and the environment.



Consulting Service

We provide consulting services to local destinations and tourism industry, to realize a new era in tourism through safe and seamless tourism practices. We encompass workforce development, and the creation of travel experiences and products



VISION:

Protecting Places. Empowering People.

Our vision drives us to craft sustainable adventure and cultural travel that benefits the planet and its people.

MISSION

To become a model of community-centered tourism in Albania, where local voices shape a sustainable and inclusive tourism future.

Sustainability Principles

We are guided by the following core principles:

1. **Environmental Sustainability:** We aim to minimize our environmental impact by reducing waste, conserving resources, and promoting eco-friendly practices in all our operations.
2. **Cultural Preservation and Community Empowerment:** We are committed to preserving local cultures, traditions, and heritage while ensuring that local communities benefit from tourism.
3. **Economic Sustainability:** We support local economies by collaborating with small businesses and service providers who adhere to sustainable and ethical practices.
4. **Ethical Tourism:** We operate with integrity, transparency, and respect for human rights. This includes fair treatment of staff, equitable business practices, and supporting positive social impacts in the regions we visit.

Our Goals

- To continuously improve our environmental and social practices, aiming for excellence in sustainability standards.
- To ensure every tour we operate contributes positively to local communities and minimizes environmental harm.
- To maintain transparency and accountability through regular sustainability audits and public reporting.

GOAL AND PROGRESS

The report offers insight into the environmental performance of various tour activities conducted in 2024. It addresses key indicators including carbon emissions, waste generation, water consumption, and energy use while mapping trends over the months. Importantly, the data is used to identify when and where sustainability interventions could deliver the most benefit.

Local Stakeholders

Consistently engage with stakeholders, including employees, customers, and local communities, to foster discussions and enhance sustainable practices.

Progress

Our active engagement led us to participate in several events that inspired collaboration between youth, tourism experts, and donors. Notably, we served on the jury panel for GIZ Albania's Sustainable Rural Development Project, supporting start-ups in municipalities such as Mirdita, Korca, Tropojë, Elbasan.

Through partnerships with the Albanian Beekeeper Association, local guides, guesthouses, and farmers, we developed bee-tours — immersive experiences led by beekeepers that celebrate local culture. We played a key role in facilitating the partnership between the Armbruster Association (Germany) and the Albanian Association of Beekeepers, establishing a bridge for cross-border knowledge exchange and sustainable development in apiculture. Through curated visits and interactions between our travelers and local beekeepers, we have not only promoted the rich tradition of Albanian beekeeping, but also actively contributed to the livelihoods of rural producers. Our joint efforts resulted in financial support for 10 local beekeepers along with institutional support the Albanian Association of Beekeepers, helping to strengthen local capacity, improve production standards, and raise awareness around pollinator conservation.

This initiative reflects our commitment to creating tourism experiences that go beyond sightseeing—empowering small-scale farmers, preserving traditional knowledge, and contributing to ecological resilience.



Future vision

We aim to formalize a Stakeholder Engagement Program that will:

- Facilitate structured, ongoing dialogue with local organizations,
- Focus on nature conservation, biodiversity, and women- and youth-led social enterprises,
- Strengthen our commitment to inclusive and collaborative sustainability practices.

Suppliers and Partners

Sustaining Progress Through Meaningful Travel Partnerships

At Sondor Travel, we believe that sustainable tourism is built not only through eco-conscious practices, but through long-standing, value-driven relationships. For over a decade we've partnered with like-minded international travel companies committed to responsible travel, cultural preservation, and environmental awareness.

These partnerships have allowed us to grow responsibly, support local communities, and position Albania as a sustainable travel destination in Europe.

Long-Term Partnerships, Lasting Impact

- **EXODUS Travel (UK) – Partner Since 2013**

Our partnership with EXODUS spans more than a decade, rooted in shared values of low-impact travel and community-based tourism. Together, we've introduced hundreds of travelers to Albania's rugged landscapes through hiking and snowshoeing tours that support local economies, respect cultural traditions, and protect fragile ecosystems.

- **Viktors Farmor (Denmark) – Partner Since 2011**

As one of our earliest collaborators, Viktors Farmor has played a vital role in developing immersive cultural and nature-based itineraries. Their dedication to small-group, meaningful travel aligns with our mission to connect visitors with Albania's authentic, off-the-beaten-path experiences—while empowering rural communities and promoting heritage preservation.

- **Topas Travel (Denmark) – Partner Since 2012**

Our work with Topas has helped shape Albania's presence in the Scandinavian market as a destination for conscious travelers. Together, we've designed hiking adventures that tread lightly on the environment and prioritize education, conservation, and deep interaction with local people and traditions.

- **VeloTrek (Germany) – Partner Since 2018**

This partnership has strengthened our active travel offerings, particularly in the German-speaking market. Through VeloTrek, we've developed multi-day cycling journeys that span Albania's mountains, coasts, and cultural corridors—combining physical activity with a strong focus on sustainability, eco-friendly lodging, and responsible tourism.

New Collaborations in 2024: Expanding the Horizon

- **Saiyu Travel (Japan)**

Our new collaboration with Saiyu Travel represents an exciting step in connecting the Japanese market with Albania's nature and cultural richness. Tours with Saiyu emphasize respect, reflection, and sustainability, offering experiences that foster genuine cultural exchange while minimizing environmental impact.

Our Suppliers

At Sondor Travel, we recognize that sustainability is a shared responsibility, and our impact is only as strong as the network of suppliers we work with. As we look toward the future, we are committed to building a supply chain that reflects our values: environmental care, cultural respect, community support, and long-term viability.

Over time, we aim to develop a supplier sustainability charter—a simple set of guidelines that helps our partners grow with us, while staying aligned with international standards for responsible tourism.

Future vision

We will continue to build ethical, transparent partnerships with a focus on:

- Prioritizing Local & Family-Owned Businesses
- Encouraging Sustainable Practices Among Suppliers
- Investing in the education and empowerment of our suppliers

Our long-term goal is to help build a certified green supply network in Albania

Environmental Impact of our tours

- **Total Participants:** 319
- **Tour Frequency:** Multiple tours with varied group sizes
- **Tour Duration:** Ranging from single-day excursions to multi-day tours

These details suggest that we offer a flexible tour schedule that accommodates different group sizes and durations, which is valuable context when evaluating per person or per - tour impacts.

Environmental Performance: 2024 Outcomes vs. 2025 Objectives

Indicator	2024	2025 Action Plan Target	Observations
Carbon Emissions	2890.24.19 kg CO ₂ total	Initiate the “100% carbon offset” for all transport emissions	Strong tracking in 2024; 2025 requires verified offset partnerships.
Waste Generation	289.6 kg total; Sept peak	Reduce single-use plastics by 40%	Needs specific waste types tracking (e.g., plastics, paper).
Water Use	12,942 L total; May/Sept peak	30% reduction in bottled water usage	Refill stations and customer awareness campaigns planned.
Energy Use	2,124.6 kWh; May highest	Renewable adoption for offices/tours (by 2026)	Few renewables from suppliers; opportunity to introduce more practises.

Sondor 2024 carbon emissions 8.9 KG CO₂e PPPDA* for all inbound clients

In Sondor, we measure the carbon dioxide emissions related to domestic transportation (mainly land and water transport) for our clients during the tours.

* CO₂e PPPDA = CO₂ emission per person per day average

Key Achievements in 2024

- Tracked carbon emissions monthly, identifying September as the most intensive.
- Analyzed water and waste consumption to identify peak pressure periods.
- Partnered with electric transport providers (e.g., Green Taxi), supporting 2025 e-mobility goals.
- Established transparent reporting practices to support annual sustainability reviews.

Gaps and Areas for Improvement

Area	2024 Limitation	2025 Plan Improvement
Monitoring Frequency	No quarterly or monthly reviews recorded	Monthly reviews & quarterly audits mandatory

Tour Staff Training	Little evidence of training activities	Ensure 100% staff to be trained in and cultural practices accordingly to the designed Training Program
Community Engagement	Initiatives reported	70% of tours must include community interaction and better dialogue and interaction with local communities and local organisations
Certification Pathway	Not initiated	Plan to achieve GSTC certification by end of 2025

Next Steps & Future Considerations

- **Enhanced Monitoring:** Continue monthly monitoring of key environmental indicators to track improvements and identify new trends.
- **Broadened Metrics:** Consider developing performance metrics on a per participant or per tour basis to provide more granular insights.
- **Refining Sustainability Goals:** Use ongoing data to refine and set more targeted sustainability objectives in the future.

Recommendations for 2025 Plan Adjustment

1. **Carbon Offsets**
 - Start partnership with a verified carbon offset provider before Month 6 of 2025.
 - Track and publish per-tour emissions to support transparency.
2. **Waste Categorization**
 - Initiate the differentiation of waste by our supplier in 2025 reporting (organic, plastic, etc.).
 - Aim 100% use of reusable kits during tours in off-season and peak months.
3. **Tour-Level Reporting**
 - Integrate metrics *per participant* and *per tour* to refine KPI insights.
 - Link logistics data with energy use/water consumption for optimization.
4. **Community and Cultural KPIs**
 - Define “local impact” metrics (e.g., 100% of spending with local suppliers).
 - Include success stories from 2024 as part of awareness materials.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- **Q2 2025:** Launch customer education portal and integrate per-tour sustainability logs.
- **Q3 2025:** Conduct full staff sustainability training and tour audits.
- **Q4 2025:** Draft and publish the 2025 Sustainability Report.
- **Ongoing:** Refine monthly monitoring processes while expanding stakeholder engagement and feedback mechanism.

CLOSING STATEMENT

In 2024, we laid the foundation for robust sustainability practices by closely monitoring our environmental impact and engaging local communities. Our 2025 focus is on structured implementation, transparent reporting, and achieving GSTC certification—paving the way for Sondor to become a national leader in sustainable tourism.



