

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

SATSA, Africa's Eden & Fair Trade Tourism (FTT): Responsible Tourism Webinar Series

What is responsible tourism, in a nutshell?

Responsible tourism is about making better places for people to live, to work, and to visit – not just safeguarding the environment but also improving community wellbeing and ensuring business benefits.

What should a business do to truly operate responsibly?

- **Assemble a “green team”:** Responsible tourism is a team effort. It requires involvement from across all departments (maintenance, housekeeping, finance, HR).
- **Teamwork matters:** Following the proverb, “If you want to go far, go together.” Working as a team builds morale, attracts top talent, and creates sustained positive impact.
- **Audit and measure:**
 - **Energy:** Start with an energy audit to identify types, amounts, and areas of energy use; only what gets measured can be managed and improved. This is not just electricity, but fuel, gas or any renewable energy such as solar.
 - **Water:** Conduct a water audit to understand your source and usage and identify ways to use water efficiently. Less than 1% of water on earth is fresh and accessible, so conservation builds resilience.
 - **Waste:** Assess the types and quantities of waste, look for recycling opportunities, and focus on reducing and reusing before recycling. Also, check use of chemicals or substances that may harm people or the environment.
- **Remember:** Reduce, reuse, recycle is the best-practice waste hierarchy. Responsible waste management is often the most visible sustainability initiative for guests—and attracts those who share your values.

How can these steps impact business performance?

- **Efficiency:** Energy and water monitoring can highlight cost-saving opportunities, leading to greater efficiency.
- **Competitive edge:** Taking visible actions, like reducing waste, supporting local suppliers, and involving the community, can help attract guests and partners that align with your values.
- **Team benefits:** Working inclusively builds team spirit and can help recruit and retain top staff.
- **Market differentiation:** Certification and transparency can lead to higher guest trust and preference.

What about HR, compliance, and inclusion?

Responsible tourism extends beyond environmental actions. It also covers fair employment practices, occupational health and safety, and universal access (such as for guests with disabilities or the elderly). Providing clear policies gives clarity for guests and staff.

How do you get started?

You're not starting from scratch; you're building on your existing experience. Start by forming your internal team, run your basic audits, and reach out for support or to begin the certification process. Fair Trade Tourism offers a framework with templates for policies to guide and support your journey, while they also provide third-party certification to verify your achievements.

Does one size fit all?

The Fair Trade Tourism framework is adaptable: the same principles apply whether you're an urban hotel or a remote bush camp, and practical tools exist for every context. Fair Trade Tourism is specifically made in Africa, for Africa, while it is also internationally recognised by Travalyst and in line with GSTC.

Need help?

You can engage with Fair Trade Tourism for step-by-step guidance, with resources and support from first steps to full certification. Visit <https://www.fairtradetourism.org/join>

General

What is the SATSA & Fair Trade Tourism (FTT) collaboration about?

SATSA, Africa's Eden and FTT have partnered to help Southern African tourism businesses implement responsible tourism practices that meet international market expectations. This partnership provides resources, tools, and regular webinars to guide tourism professionals step-by-step towards more sustainable, competitive operations.

Why is responsible tourism important right now?

International travellers and buyers increasingly demand proof of sustainability and ethical business practices from tourism providers. Responsible tourism is now a business imperative for gaining and keeping international business, as well as for operating more efficiently and making a positive impact locally.

Who shared their experiences in the recent webinar?

Representatives from diverse SATSA and FTT-certified member businesses, including PJ Basson (Montagu Country Hotel), Jessica Salmon (Flatdogs Camp, Zambia), Jean Toucher (Ghost Mountain Inn & Safaris), and Michael Daiber (!Khwa ttu San Culture & Education Centre), shared how responsible tourism transformed their operations, from cost savings and certification to unique community engagement projects.

What were the main takeaways from the panellists?

- Responsible tourism is effective across all business sizes, from small camps to large hotels and DMCs.
- Cross-department "green teams" encourage innovation and collective ownership.

- Measurable business benefits include cost savings, team morale, easier access to international markets, and increased revenue.
- Success comes from authentic engagement: real community benefit, compelling storytelling, and visible sustainability initiatives.
- Certification, such as through FTT, builds credibility and simplifies international contracting and reporting.

About FTT Certification

What is Fair Trade Tourism certification?

FTT certification is a process that helps tourism businesses systematically adopt responsible environmental, social, and governance best practices. It is aligned with international sustainability standards, ensuring mutual recognition globally while catering to Africa's unique context.

Is certification only for certain tourism sectors?

Fair Trade Tourism certification is open to tourism businesses based in Africa, including accommodation, activities (e.g. boat cruise, ziplining, etc), attraction, venue, food service, volunteer tourism, or community tour (an independently marketed and packaged day tour that involved the same third party service providers every time).

Fair Trade Tourism has a partnership with **Travelife for Tour Operators** to engage with tour operators, travel agencies and DMCs around certification for responsible tourism.

How long does certification take?

Most businesses take 6–18 months to complete the process, depending on their starting point and the level of readiness. The first audit is on-site, while renewals are done every three years and can be done remotely.

What support is available during the process?

FTT and SATSA provide access to webinars, practical toolkits, documentation templates, step-by-step guides, and expert Q&A sessions. You'll also be able to learn directly from other members' journeys.

How much does it cost?

FTT membership is charged annually and based on number of full time employees, while the audit costs are charged separately (one every three years), but in line with annual membership fee. Visit <https://www.fairtradetourism.org/feesMember> for details on the fees.

Is FTT certification recognised internationally?

Yes. FTT is aligned with international bodies, including Travalyst, ensuring your certification is globally credible and accepted by overseas buyers and agents.

Practical Implementation

What are simple first steps for responsible tourism?

- Conduct a basic audit of your energy, water, and waste use.
- Assemble a cross-functional green team.
- Start recording and tracking sustainability-related expenses and initiatives.

- Review your HR and supply chain policies – look for opportunities to include local communities and suppliers.
- Share your authentic stories – guests relate strongly to real, positive impact.

What are some examples of successful initiatives?

- Transforming hotel spaces to feature and support local artists.
- Running staff-led environmental or community projects (such as chicken coops supplying both the kitchen and local gardens).
- Partnering with schools, supporting children's education, or starting community gardens.
- Collecting data to enable carbon-neutral weddings or events.
- Supporting local procurement and fair employment practices.
- Working with local community service providers, such as local bee-keepers helping to. Control elephant migration.

Marketplace Advantage

How does responsible tourism improve business competitiveness?

- Increases likelihood of international contracts and partnerships.
- Gives credible answers to buyer sustainability questionnaires.
- Enhances guest satisfaction and loyalty.
- Opens doors to new market segments valuing ethics and sustainability.
- Drives operational savings (energy, water, waste reduction).

Do guests and buyers really care?

Yes! Both consumers and partners are asking to see, visit, and verify social and environmental projects. They expect transparency, not just a sustainability statement.

More Resources & Next Steps

Where can I watch the webinar?

You can watch a recording of the webinar [here](#).

How do I get started with certification?

Visit the FTT website: <https://www.fairtradetourism.org/>

How do I participate in future webinars or networking opportunities?

Watch for announcements in SATSA newsletters and on our events calendar. Register early to secure your spot.

Who can I contact for more information?

- **Fair Trade Tourism:** <https://www.fairtradetourism.org/> or info@fairtradetourism.org
- **SATSA Responsible Tourism:** <https://www.satsa.com/>