



Sponsor Profile

Your name: Rosario Arroyo
Organisation: Metropolitan Touring
Position: UK Office Manager

Organisation Profile:

Metropolitan Touring is one of South America's best-known and most-respected travel companies. We have provided unrivalled service to our guests for nearly 60 years. We run our own ground operations in Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Brasil and Colombia. We own and operate the finest ships for expedition cruises in the Galapagos Islands – the M/V Santa Cruz, Yacht Isabela II and Yacht La Pinta – as well as the Finch Bay Eco Hotel.

Can you summarise your commitment to sustainable tourism?

Metropolitan Touring constantly seeks to leave a positive environmental footprint in the communities it works with, as well as contributing to preserve the integrity of ecosystems. We motivate our clients, guests and staff on environmental awareness with practical actions that are tangible and quantifiable. Our Environmental Policy aims at enhancing the experiences of our guests and the daily work practices of our staff members, and to promote a full circle of environmental improvement, especially when these practices are taken to their homes.

In 1998, and through the initiative and sponsorship of Metropolitan Touring, Fundacion Galapagos was created as a non-profit organization with the mission of providing support and funding for conservation projects directly related to the sustainable development of the Galapagos Islands. Several Galapagos operators have since joined Fundacion Galapagos.

Examples of recent actions?

Fundacion Galapagos runs several projects, amongst which the most prominent are the “**Coastal Cleaning**” – so far over **95 tonnes of rubbish has been collected** from the islands in 114 trips, which include the participation of local fishermen who in return receive an economic incentive that replaces revenue generated from fishing; **3,670 tonnes of solids have been recycled**, including plastic, cardboard, glass, batteries, etc., as part of the “**Solid Waste Recycling Project**”; over 210 children from the local schools in Puerto Ayora, Puerto Baquerizo Moreno and Puerto Villamil have travelled on board Metropolitan Touring's vessels as part of the “**Galapagos Educational Cruises Project**”; and the youngest initiative of all, is the “**Burnt Oils Removal Programme**”, where on board Metropolitan Touring's cargo vessel we ship out to the mainland burnt oils from generators that otherwise would go to marine and terrestrial environments when changed. Thus far, over 22,000 gallons of burnt oils have been collected and shipped out from the islands. All shipping and handling expenses have been absorbed by Metropolitan Touring.

And our commitment doesn't stop there, of course! From our eco-intelligent main office building in Quito, that naturally manages light and temperature thus reducing electricity consumption, to a deeply ingrained “no-waste” attitude towards paper, water, etc., **sustainability** is at the heart of everything Metropolitan Touring does. This is reflected in the tours we develop - our *Spirit of the Andes*, or *Loja, A Step Back in the Time*, for instance, actively involve local communities and locally-run projects -; in the clean way we run our operations in Galapagos – our vessels are constantly monitored to ensure fuel and energy consumption efficiency, effective sewage treatment, hi tech instruments, etc. -; in the non-stop environmental training, not only in-house to all levels of the company, our guides, drivers, ships' crew, etc., but to the suppliers we work with, etc.

What about your carbon footprint?

Perhaps our most ambitious environmental project is the building, conditioning, and adaptation of the wonderful Mashpi Biodiversity Lodge, northeast of Quito. The area holds 1,200 hectares and is probably one of the most accessible locations for understanding a cloud forest and all of its remarkable complexities. The flora and fauna of this area must be protected since it belongs to the biogeographical region of the Chocó. With the investments in Mashpi we plan to give hope to the forest, capture CO2 by protecting trees, offer alternatives to the local community, and develop in guests a new appreciation for wild places.



Are you involved with the Latin America Travel Association?

Metropolitan Touring has been an active member of LATA in the last 15 years, participating in its several initiatives conducive to promote the region to the UK market.

Can you outline your firm's involvement with the LATA Foundation:

Metropolitan Touring has been ready to support LATA Foundation activities and actively participated in all its fund-raising activities. Personally, I was privileged enough to be part of its Projects Committee for over a year, and, time/availability permitting, I would like to resume this, or a similar role, in the coming winter.

You have recently announced additional support for the LATA Foundation:

Yes, we have responded to the LATA Foundation's plea to support New Era Galapagos Foundation, and we are happy to confirm the donation of a projector, and school supplies, to be delivered in the next few weeks.