



## Case Study

### Wind and Cloud Travel Ltd

Wind and Cloud Travel is an Edinburgh-based tour operator, offering German speaking eco, hiking, trekking, whisky, sailing, food, rail and photography tours for individual travellers (self-guided tours) and small groups (guided tours with less than 15 people) in Scotland.

The Micro Business Award is an additional award for the best entry to any category. It is open to businesses with less than 10 employees. Wind and Cloud Travel applied for the VIBES Transport Award and while they were not successful in winning that category, the VIBES judges felt that it was an excellent showcase for what a Micro Business can achieve.

Wind and Cloud Travel are an enthusiastic company who actively promote sustainable transport options for travellers. Their drive and commitment to put sustainable transport at the heart of the operations and the practical measures they have taken to ensure this, makes Wind and Cloud Travel a worthy winner of the VIBES Micro Business Award.

The company's achievements have also been recognised elsewhere, winning the Scottish Green Apple Award, in the Travel and Leisure category and also being shortlisted for the Best Tour Operator 2014 Gold Star Award of the Green Tourism Business Scheme.

#### Highlights

- The company have a strong commitment to sustainability.
- The company plays a key role in promoting sustainability to their customers, supply chain and other similar businesses
- Wind and Cloud Travel offer public transport and hybrid cars to individual travellers as part of the sustainable transport policy.
- There is regular engagement with the local and international community, to promote sustainable tourism.
- The company use specific 'Green' businesses for each of their tours, helping with stability and job security for these businesses.
- Environmental commitment is communicated to clients through an 'Environmental Guidelines' document

Wind and Cloud Travel demonstrated that they work closely with their staff, clients and suppliers to improve their environmental reputation. They provide a screening checklist for potential partnership businesses, including vehicle hire companies and hospitality to assess their commitment to the environment. Staff travel policy also encourages use of public transport instead of own vehicles, as expenses are only paid for public transport costs

#### VIBES Award Category:



#### Micro Business Award

(Sponsored by Highlands and Islands Enterprise)

#### Winner:



#### Wind and Cloud Travel Ltd

Wind and Cloud Travel also communicate their commitment to the environment to their clients through an 'Environmental Guidelines' document, which is given to each of their clients prior to their tour. The document details the environmental guidelines that they are to follow when on a Wind and Cloud tour.

Wind and Cloud Travel, through their sustainable practices have provided benefits to the global community, including:

- Reduced carbon emissions, helping to reduce the rate of climate change
- Significant donations (by Wind and Cloud, and by their customers) to Atmosfair – a global charity which strives to improve sustainable travel
- Support to the German community through donating to German charities. Last year their charity of choice focussed on getting children in Germany more involved in environmental issues
- Taking on German interns on an annual basis - This year's intern is doing a thesis on ecotourism

The founders of Wind and Cloud Travel have published German travel literature about Scotland to spread the word about their green way of travelling. You can find walking, trekking and city guide books promoting green places to visit in Scotland among their merits:

- Central Highlands and Cairngorms, by Anja Vogel, Conrad Stein Verlag 2007
- Western Highlands, by Anja Vogel, Conrad Stein Verlag 2008
- Cityguide Edinburgh, by Katja Wüdrich and Anja Vogel, Goldfinch Verlag 2008
- Schottland, by Katja Wüdrich and Reiner Luyken, Merian Verlag 2009
- Schottland, MERIANlive, by Katja Wüdrich, Merian Verlag 2011
- Whisky Trails, by Katja Wüdrich and Seonaidh Adams, Goldfinch Verlag, 2013

They also share their expertise through Forum Anders Reisen, newsletters, PR/marketing activities, the Green Tourism Business Scheme and Visit Scotland.

The VIBES Judges felt that the company is an excellent example of a Micro Business which has developed an innovative service encompassing environmental benefits, whilst supporting social benefits and economic growth.

The Judges were impressed by the innovative nature of the services offered by Wind and Cloud Travel. A German-speaking sustainable tourism operator is an innovation for the sector in Scotland. The Eco-Tour product goes above and beyond the environmental standards expected in this area.

*Katja Wüdrich, Founder of Wind & Cloud Travel Ltd., commented: "Sustainable Tourism has always been at the heart of our business but we are still a bit overwhelmed by this amazing news. To receive the recognition and acknowledgement through the VIBES Awards for our efforts shows us that we are on the right track and we will keep going."*

