



ASTA Corporate Social Responsibility

Assisting Travel Agents in Changing the World

ASTA believes that through its association staff and our membership we can “change the world” for the better. ASTA’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program is focused on three major components:

- Climate Change and Environmental Protection
- Social Responsibility
- Ethical Business Practices

Climate Change and Environmental Protection

ASTA is committed to protecting the environment and working to lessen the negative impact of global climate change. To that end, ASTA has developed an educational program to assist its members in becoming responsible sellers of “green” travel.

ASTA’s [Green Program](#) centers on educating agency and supplier members on the green travel movement. The program provides information on recognizing and implementing environmentally sustainable business practices and includes self-assessment materials for internal operations as well as tools for selecting environmentally conscious travel suppliers. Members who participate in the program agree to abide by a strict code of ethics and uphold ASTA’s pro-environment mission.

To further our environmental goals, we are a charter member of the [Global Sustainability Tourism Council](#) (GSTC). The GSTC evolved from the UN’s Tourism Sustainability Council. GSTC has developed key criteria to be used as a minimum standard for any tourism business that



aspires to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for poverty alleviation. ASTA has also joined [Convene Green](#), an organization devoted to helping associations "green" their meetings and events. We are actively moving to make our events and meetings more sustainable, although we expect it will take several years to fully meet our sustainability meetings goals.

Internally, ASTA has changed its everyday business operations to be more in line with environmentally responsible practices. An internal task force composed of staff members promotes and implements environmentally-friendly practices in the office. Employees were provided information on recycling, the use of environmentally friendly printing products and biodegradable packaging material, energy conservation, telecommuting and working with vendors who offer environmentally-friendly office supplies. Through this and other initiatives, ASTA strives to conserve energy; reduce employee's carbon footprint; promote the "reduce, reuse, recycle" philosophy and to reduce internal waste and operating costs.

Social Responsibility

ASTA believes the travel industry, as a whole and on an individual level, has a responsibility to encourage travelers to become more environmentally and socially aware of the impact of their travel and to support the communities which they visit. This concept of responsible tourism generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the social and environmental well-being of host communities.

Through its efforts working with industry organizations such as [Tourism Cares](#) and [Global Volunteers](#), ASTA is able to support activities that contribute to local economies and bring awareness to the critical role that tourism plays throughout the world.

To further ASTA's goal of improving the world through tourism, in 2004 ASTA adopted [the Code of Conduct](#) for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism. The Society encourages its members to support government measures taken to counter the sexual



exploitation of women and children, to inform colleagues of the negative consequences of "sex tourism," and to advise clients of the penalties imposed on tourists who commit such acts. ASTA was the first association with global reach to adopt the Code. The Code was developed by the group End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes-Sweden ([ECPAT](#)) in coordination with Scandinavian tour operators and the World Tourism Organization (WTO).

Additionally, ASTA renewed its commitment in 2012 to lead the travel industry in an ongoing battle against human trafficking and child sex tourism by formally joining the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) "[Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking](#)" partnership.

As part of its commitment to ending the sexual exploitation of children, ASTA, among other things, agreed to establish an ethical policy regarding commercial sexual exploitation of children and introduce a clause in contracts with suppliers, stating a common repudiation of commercial sexual exploitation of children. ASTA now requires that its meetings hosts and host hotels sign a contract repudiating the commercial sexual exploitation of children, forbidding such activities to be conducted in facilities, including hotels, related to the ASTA event and to immediately take all appropriate legal and other steps to terminate such activities.

ASTA has also signed onto the American Society of Association Executive's [Global Principles](#) for Socially Responsible Associations & Nonprofits. The Global Principles align with universally accepted principles contained in the United Nation's [Global Compact](#) regarding positive progress and specifically defined expectations in areas such as human rights, labor, education, poverty, health, the environment, and anti-corruption. ASTA's actions in regards to the sex tourism trade, environmentally-friendly travel and in supporting the efforts of the [Millennium Foundation](#) are aligned with the principles.

Ethical Business Practices

Today's travel industry is a key player in the global economy. As the travel industry's star has risen, so too have travelers' choices. Modern travelers, faced with myriad alternatives regarding



transportation, accommodations and other travel services, are in need of sound advice to assist them in sorting through and selecting the best travel options to suit their needs. Faced with these complexities, travelers depend on travel agencies and others in the industry to provide them with honest and competent advice. It is incumbent upon all travel agents to provide clients with unbiased information. To that end, all ASTA members agree to act in accordance with the applicable sections of the [ASTA Code of Ethics](#) and pledge to conduct their business activities in a manner that promotes the ideal of integrity in travel.