

Sustainability at USTOA

We are recapping a motivating two years of sustainability milestones at USTOA and we commend our member community for their collective guidance and dedication to responsible travel. Thanks to our Active and Associate Members, we can reflect on where we have come from and look forward to where we are heading!

While the USTOA Sustainability Community has been forming for quite some time now, the culmination of collaboration in sustainability at USTOA truly began at the 2022 SIR 1.0 Summit in Bodo, Norway. Since then, we have been working to build upon the momentum founded there.



Key USTOA Sustainability Highlights

- The USTOA Sustainability Committee is comprised of Active and Associate members representing various corners of the Travel and Tourism Industry. The committee's mission is to advance sustainability within USTOA, member companies, and the wider community. The four pillars of focus for the committee are 1) education, 2) change management to address adaptation and mitigation, 3) community, and 4) guidance.
- USTOA's **Global Social Impact Manager**, Molly Laycob, who is dedicated to supporting USTOA members on their journey towards more sustainable practices.
- **USTOA Future Lights** program, sponsored by Trip Mate, recognizes individuals as champions of sustainability and DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) efforts within their own companies, and now, among all members of USTOA and the greater tour and travel industry. USTOA continues to focus on the people, issues, and opportunities that will shape and improve the tour industry for future generations. Each of the USTOA Future Lights help lead us into a more sustainable, responsible, and equitable future.
- The **USTOA SIR Resources Hub**, a USTOA members only portal webpage dedicated to all things sustainability and DEI within the USTOA community. Resources, events,

updates, and announcements for all USTOA members interested in being a part of our SIR community can be found here. Through the hub, members can access our Journey to Responsible Travel Library, which comprises best practices, plans, templates, and so much more, compiled by USTOA members along their sustainability and DEI journeys and sent to us specifically for the purpose of helping other members.

- The **USTOA Sustainability Policy and Member Responsible Travel Promise** represents an official statement from USTOA to the travel and tourism community regarding our efforts to move forward on our sustainability journey, internally and externally, as a group of individuals with a common goal - to use the reach of our Active Membership, Associate Membership, and tourism network to ensure a sustainable future for the travel and tourism industry by balancing economic growth, environmental care, and social wellbeing. These three pillars that define sustainability will propel USTOA and our combined membership into a future of and for responsible travelers. This policy was written by USTOA Sustainability Community members. Sitting alongside the USTOA Sustainability Policy is the Member Responsible Travel Promise, which is a way for our members to acknowledge the policy and commit to working through our tiers of involvement.
- The **USTOA SIR Education Series** sessions are formed around focus areas and topics collected throughout conversations with USTOA Active and Associate members discussing sustainability journeys and what would be beneficial to discuss to help move forward with initiatives. The sessions are held monthly and are available for anyone under the USTOA umbrella to attend, regardless of if their position is related to sustainability. The sessions include subject matter experts and case studies from within the USTOA family, with the goal of giving members an opportunity to learn from other company's collective experiences, successes and hurdles included. Since we never want the innovative creative process to end, each session also includes an optional follow-up discussion open to anyone interested in continuing the conversation! These follow-up discussions are 1-2 weeks after the original session and are designed to give our members, an opportunity to speak about their personal experiences with these topics and either ask for guidance or offer expertise to help others facing similar situations.
- Annual **SIR Summits**, which were designed in collaboration with Innovation Norway to bring together sustainability champions within our community while also showcasing a destination where real sustainable innovation is taking place, giving attendees first-hand experiences and knowledge to return to their organizations with. The SIR summits create unique opportunities for attendees to engage and collaborate with fellow sustainability staff members in the travel and tourism industry who find themselves facing similar obstacles. The SIR summit atmosphere

provides a safe space for transparency and support to help each other advance in individual organizations' sustainability journeys while also establishing roadmaps to address our collective challenges as an industry.



SIR 3.0 Attendees at the Henderson Waves in Singapore

Sustainability goals for 2024 and beyond..

For the Member Community

- Continuation of the above initiatives as well as growing our sustainability community through collaboration, partnerships, and engagement opportunities
- Incorporate additional sustainability sessions and opportunities at USTOA events

For the Association

- Begin process of tracking, measuring, and reporting on internal operations with the goal of reducing carbon footprint
- Continue working towards a meaningful supply chain by including sustainability standards and criteria in RFPs for events and other vendors

For more information about the USTOA Sustainability Community, its resources, and ways to collaborate, please contact Molly Laycob at gsi@ustoa.com.