

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM AWARDS ANNOUNCED



Responsible tourism is a very popular term these days. “Green” businesses are mushrooming all over the world as the popularity of responsible tourism grows. Businesses that implement some principles of responsible tourism record high levels of repeat bookings. To be environmentally responsible has simply become a kind of a lifestyle.

The recently announced **Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards 2008** are one of the events that help to raise awareness of this kind of traveling. People from all over the world have nominated 1,976 destinations for the awards, which are regarded as the most competitive and prestigious in this field. The project is a result of cooperation of its founder, the responsibletravel.com, and of the UK media partners which include The Daily Telegraph, Geographical Magazine, BBC World News and World Travel Market.

The overall winner was **New Zealand** because it has managed to implement many of the principles of the Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism, proving that tourism industry may benefit people as well as the environment. The winner in the category of Best Tour Operator was “**Explore**” from the UK. They have invested in energy-efficient projects and also created a position of a full-time responsible tourism manager. “**Bycyklen - The Foundation City Bikes in Copenhagen**” has gained the award for Best Low Carbon Transport & Technology. They provide more than 2,000 city bikes for free public use, which indisputably helps to reduce the carbon emissions in the city. There were 14 award winners and their full list is available at the www.responsibletourismawards.com.

The awards are meant for those who deliver benefits to the destination and to local people. The winners were chosen by a panel of experts who assessed the references as well as filled-in questionnaires they have received from the competitors. On the judging day they met at the Royal Geographical Society where they discussed and decided about the winners in every category.

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