

Sustainability report 2009

OCEANO Gomera
La Gomera
111 La Gomera



OCEANO
WHALE WATCHING LA GOMERA

Table of contents

1. Company portrait	
1.1. Finances	
1.1.1. Sales	
1.1.2. Expenditure pattern.....	
1.2. Travel offers	
2. Sustainability within the company	
2.1 Corporate vision.....	
3. Responsibility for customers	
4. Environment.....	
4.1. Water consumption	
4.2. Power consumption	
4.3. Consumption of heat energy	
4.4. Mobility.....	
4.4.1. Business trips	
4.4.2. Commuting	
4.5. Purchasing.....	
4.6. Paper consumption	
5. Employees	
6. Responsibility for community	
7. Product stewardship within the service chain	
7.1 Arrangement of quotation	
7.2 Service providers	
7.2.1 Partner agencies.....	
7.2.2 Accommodation	
7.2.3 Tour guides.....	
7.2.4. Transport	
Company information.....	

Data base: 2008



1. Company portrait



OCEANO Reisen, formerly Wellenreiter Reisen, was founded in 1994 by Susanne Braack in Germany.

Out of enthusiasm about being out at sea and watching dolphins and whales in their natural habitat grew a small tour operator which exclusively offered sailing holidays to watch cetaceans in the Canary Islands (Tenerife / La Gomera).

A few years later the range of programmes was extended by travel

packages with 3 – 4 hour whale watching tours starting in Valle Gran Rey / La Gomera. Susanne Braack developed her professional base of life through this extension.

At the end of 2007 all boats from the partner agency on La Gomera were put out of service due to legal reasons and the exerted pressure from the competition. The former partner decided then et al. due to his age not to renew the licenses for his boats. Thereupon, Susanne Braack founded her own whale watching company in 2008. It took until July 2008 until all licenses and permissions for the first boat of the company OCEANO Gomera S.L. had been obtained. In middle July the 3 – 4 hour excursions to encounter whales and dolphins could be resumed. On 08 August 2008 the OCEANO Gomera office in Valle Gran Rey / Vueltas on La Gomera was officially opened.

After the repositioning on La Gomera the German company Wellenreiter Reisen was also renamed to OCEANO Whale Watching Reisen so as not to confuse the customers with different company names. Previously, a new and homogenous CI had been designed to make OCEANO more compatible and harmonize its launch on the market. The travel packages are sold via self- and secondary distribution. The most important advertising medium is its own website.

In 2008, there were 4 employees hired on La Gomera with permanent contracts. In 2009 an additional employee joined the team.

Susanne Braack is on La Gomera for the bigger part of the year where the main office is situated and from where also the enquiries for the German company are being dealt with. There is no office in Germany as Susanne Braack works from where she is staying at the respective time. OCEANO Whale Watching Reisen has two permanent employees. The employees of OCEANO also work as travel guides.

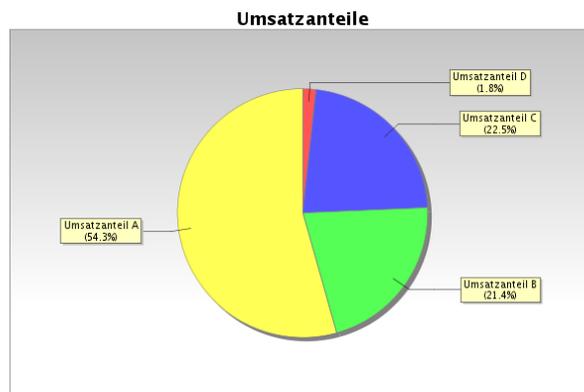
Susanne Braack is the sole owner of both companies and conducts the CSR process.

1.1. Finances

Due to the unclear local situation and the resulting consequences (suspension of all advertising measures until all licenses had been granted and the excursions could be resumed) the year 2008 presented itself as a poor financial year.

1.1.1. Sales

The main business is the travel programme „Oceanic Weeks“ for individual clients on La Gomera. In 2008, two sailing weeks called „Ocean Party“ (group travels) took place. Furthermore, two group travels to the Azores were offered in summer.



Share of sales identification:

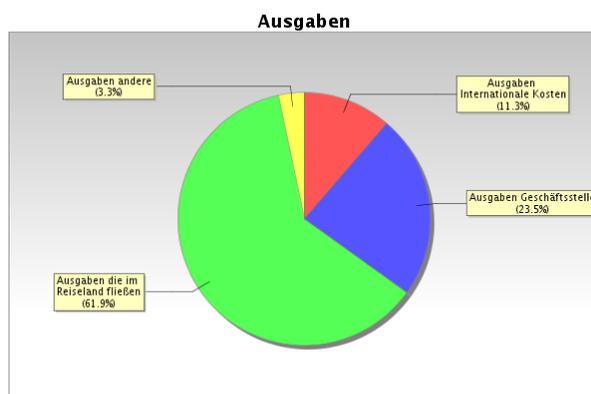
Share of sales A	Share of sales B	Share of sales C	Share of sales D
Oceanic Week La Gomera	Ocean Party Sailing tour	The Azores	Others

1.1.2. Expenditure pattern

A large part of the total turnover goes to the benefit of the local communities in the respective destinations (La Gomera / The Azores).

The international costs were generated through the charter costs for the sailing weeks as the partner agency was based in the Netherlands.

In 2008 the foundations were laid for a re-launch of OCEANO Reisen for the turn of the year 08/09 and it was invested in new booking software, a new CI, a new catalogue and the revision of the website.



1.2. Travel offers

The main programme takes place on La Gomera / Canary Islands and is called Oceanic Week Classic targeted at individual travellers. The Oceanic Weeks are bookable for one or two weeks and are booked by singles, couples, single parents, families and senior citizens. The Oceanic Week Classic includes three whale watching excursions guided by an OCEANO guide and a guided excursion into the National Park Garajonay. Arrival for this holiday can be at any chosen day of the week within a stated period during the year.

An extension (for an optional amount of days) is possible and often booked in addition.

The sailing weeks off Tenerife / La Gomera (group tours) officially lasted 7 days but many clients booked a week as extension in addition. The summer tours to the Azores/Portugal (group travel) were advertised as programmes of 10 and 14 days.

	Group travels	Individual travels
Average duration of travel	8,5 days	9,5 days

	Group travels	Individual travels
Number of travellers	30	82

Sustainability within the company

Essentially, respectful whale watching is the most important aspect of OCEANO's sustainable work. Over the years the cooperation with the biologists from the German NPO M.E.E.R. e.V. and (then still) Wellenreiter Reisen has become ever closer. Susanne Braack had been vice chairman of M.E.E.R. e.V. for seven years.

Educational work and public relations about cetaceans, the oceans and their protections has become increasingly important and takes up ever more space and time; respectful whale watching has become a matter of course. Up until the opening of the office on La Gomera a donation was paid over to the NPO for every booking made. Due to the office opening it became possible to house the permanent exhibition "Dolphins and Whales off La Gomera – Species diversity in a changing world" by M.E.E.R. e.V. . OCEANO provides the room for this exhibition free of charge. The exhibition itself was financed by the IFAW, the foundation Software AG and the Deutsche Umwelthilfe. At times, a free seat on an excursion is provided for one of the studying marine biologists.

Intensive educational work through lectures and documentary screenings are an important topic for OCEANO and are offered 2 – 4 times weekly.

Susanne Braack, who is conducting the CSR process and is also the CSR representative, had already been looking for a way to certify OCEANO Whale Watching Reisen for over 1.5 years. Unfortunately, no adequate process could be found at that time. Thus, the possibility to certify the company's sustainable work through the CSR process conducted by ForumAndersReisen was wholeheartedly embraced.

1.1 Corporate vision

OCEANO Whale Watching Reisen - specialized tour operator for respectful encounters with dolphins, whales and the sea.

OCEANO Whale Watching Reisen is specialized as a tour operator in terms of a responsible tourism that is in greatest possible harmony with nature and the people in the respective destinations.

OCEANO Holidays are individual experiential journeys with a love for the ocean and passion to detail.

Conducting respectful whale watching is a high priority for the entire OCEANO team just as raising knowledge and awareness of the marine mammals and the oceans, treating the planet's and one's own resources respectfully and making sure their guests can enjoy their well-deserved holidays to the fullest.

Listed below are the 4 pillars of OCEANO's corporate vision:

1. Respectful whale watching

„We are the visitors, the whales and dolphins are our hosts.“

As whale watching can become a stress factor for the marine mammals as well, respectful observations of whales and dolphins are the key prerequisite for a long term use of the “resource marine mammals”. Naturally, we adhere to the regulations of the respective country (if existent).

Our boats serve also as a research platform as our crew collects scientific data on each tour. OCEANO supports the German NGO M.E.E.R. e.V. and their scientific work on La Gomera and cooperates with various organisations for the protection of whales. Tourists on La Gomera can visit the permanent exhibition of M.E.E.R. e.V. “Dolphins and Whales off La Gomera – Species diversity in a changing world” in our OCEANO office and information centre free of charge.

2. Customer satisfaction

Another main concern is customer satisfaction. From the initial contact onwards we always give personal and individual advice to our customers. Also locally, in the respective destinations we act upon the individual needs of our guests. The feedback form filled out by our guests is of great importance within the company.

3. Educational work and raising awareness of the oceans and the marine mammals

We hold regular lectures and screenings of documentaries at our office on La Gomera pointing out the different threats to the sensitive eco system of the oceans and their inhabitants. We provide all guests locally with comprehensive information material and “eco tips” for their holidays. On the boat trips the guests obtain information through a multilingual team member.

4. Conservation and sustainability in the everyday life

Together with our partner atmosfair we would like to encourage our clients to offset the carbon emissions of their holiday flights. As a further step we offer additionally to every booking the Oceanic Fair Package (carbon offset through atmosfair and a dolphin/whale sponsorship through M.E.E.R. e.V.).

Being a member of ForumAndersReisen we accept their list of criteria. In the future, the CSR sustainability process shall continue to bring to the fore the sustainability of our travel offers and will certainly become a natural imperative for the entire OCEANO team.

We regard the CSR report as a continuous process to enhance the integration of even more environmental and sustainability aspects into the everyday life at the office.



2. Responsibility for customers

Predominantly, the customers receive information about oceanic topics during their holidays, as well as about the vegetation and essential aspects of the island.

A feedback questionnaire is enclosed in the information folder which every client receives upon arrival. Usually they return the questionnaire to us prior to their departure.

The response rate is very high as we directly ask the clients to please return it to us. The reason for the high customer satisfaction is the individual and personal guest relation. Group size varies between 1 – 10 persons. Often, the clients emphasize the dedication of the team.

"These holidays have exceeded my expectations, not only because of the encounters with dolphins and whales but also because of the above mentioned things (friendly welcome, very good e-mail correspondence during the reservation process, the friendly team) and because the whale watching is conducted in a respectful manner."

Saskia J., Holland

"Great service, thanks to your team." R. and M., CH

Indices

	percentage
Customer satisfaction index	98
Response rate customer survey	95
Index for the quality of customers' information	72

	Travellers
Number of travellers per guide	7,5

4. Environment

Waste separation, reduction of paper usage, usage of recycled paper (if available, as it is not always in store on Tenerife and completely unavailable on La Gomera), purchase of biological fair trade products – all this we do naturally. CO₂ emission compensations haven't been conducted up to now. The office on La Gomera has a surface of 100m².

We offer our clients to obtain filtered potable water from us. Thus, we avoid the production of more plastic waste, as potable water is usually bought in 5l plastic containers.

	Tons (t)
CO ₂ emissions (total)	2.93
CO ₂ per employee	0.73

4.1. Water consumption

There is no relevant data available in regards to water consumption. At the office, water consumption is restricted to a very small percentage in the office kitchen and the toilets.

4.2. Power consumption

As there was no office in use until August 2008 there is no specific data available for the entire year 2008 and the data available will be incorporated into the report for 2009. In the office on La Gomera we use to 90% low energy light bulbs as well as flat screens. There is no air conditioning installed. We set value on low power consumption, e.g. for the shop window lighting we have installed a time switch turning it off at night.

Unfortunately, there is only one energy provider – here, you are lucky if there is a constant power supply during the winter months.

4.3. Consumption of heat energy

This is not an item as heating is not necessary on the Canary Islands.

4.4. Mobility

4.4.1. Business trips

A total of 14.642 km were flown. This corresponds to 2.93 t of CO² emissions.

Included in the business trips are two trips conducted by Susanne Braack to La Gomera and one journey from La Gomera the Azores for guiding a group there. Unfortunately, there are no direct flights available for this route (Tenerife - Madrid, Madrid - Lisbon, Lisbon - Horta) leading to a drastic increase in CO² emissions.

4.4.2. Commuting

All employees of the Spanish company come to the office walking or riding their bicycles.

4.5. Purchasing

It is not always possible to buy recycled paper on the Canaries. If possible, we only work with recycled paper. By purchasing from an organic wholesaler which we have found recently the percentage of ecologically fair products (e.g. cleaning products, coffee, tea, and biscuits for the excursions) can be raised to 100%.

Almost 95% of the bookings are carried out without the usage of paper.

Our clients receive an information folder upon arrival – they are welcome to take home those pages that they find most interesting and we fill up the folders afterwards.

In the office we use the back pages of already printed paper.

	%
Percentage of 100% recycled paper used in the office	66.67

5. Employees

The main topic of our holiday offers – dolphins and whales – is very popular among all employees which leads to them being able to identify easily with the company. Working hours can be organised flexibly if required. We have 4 employees on La Gomera and 2 freelancers working for the German company. Enhancements in in-service training would be very much appreciated by the team. Furthermore, we want to intensify the familiarisation of the varying Spanish captains with our corporate vision.

It would be good to be able to pay higher salaries; this obviously depends on the company's overall development.

Additionally, we offer 1 – 2 internships throughout the year to allow students or other qualified persons to gain practical experience.

Employees of the company

	Men	Women	Total
Executive position		1	1
Freelance	1	1	2
Employees with a training in tourism or at least 3 years of working experience	1	1	2
Apprenticeship positions			
Internships			
Temporary contracts			
Employees without any training in tourism or without any working experience	1	1	2
Employees abroad	2	3	5

Assessment of the company culture from the employees' point of view

	%
Index of satisfaction	80.0

6. Responsibility for the community

At the end of 2007, OCEANO started a partnership with atmosfair with a link to the NGO from our website. Additionally, OCEANO pays a donation to the German NPO M.E.E.R. e.V. for every received booking. We offer one to two internships throughout the year.

Since the opening of the OCEANO office on La Gomera, Susanne Braack meets with the environmental councillor of Valle Gran Rey every two months to share information. A project that was planned and implemented in 2008 was the purchase of a water filter to provide clients and the team with high quality potable water in the OCEANO office and avoid producing more plastic waste.

OCEANO supports a child (girl) in Niger through a sponsorship with PLAN International.

	%
Share of total travel price flowing into the destination country (in %)	61.88

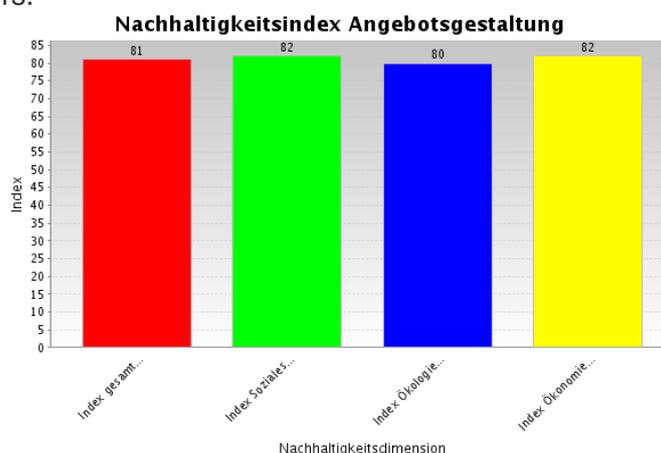
	€
Financial support for sustainability projects	600.0

7. Product stewardship within the service chain

There are no permanent contracts with any apartment complexes as the contract is concluded through each respective apartment booking. All employees of the apartment complexes have permanent contracts and/or are working within the family business.

7.1 Arrangement of quotation

It is of utmost importance to us whether a respectful whale watching is conducted and naturally, if there are favourable conditions for whale watching excursions; this applies to all our destinations. Furthermore, it is very important to us whether the local community profits and receives an added value from our travel offers.



7.2 Service providers

It is not possible to choose from any accommodations that place value on energy and other resource saving policies as ecological and conservational thinking is only entering slowly into the daily life on La Gomera and Pico on the Azores.

A plus on La Gomera is that almost all of the apartment complexes use solar power to heat the water e.g. for the showers etc. There are hardly any certified service providers apart from one hotel with which we increasingly cooperate since 2009. A support of local ecological projects is planned for the following year.

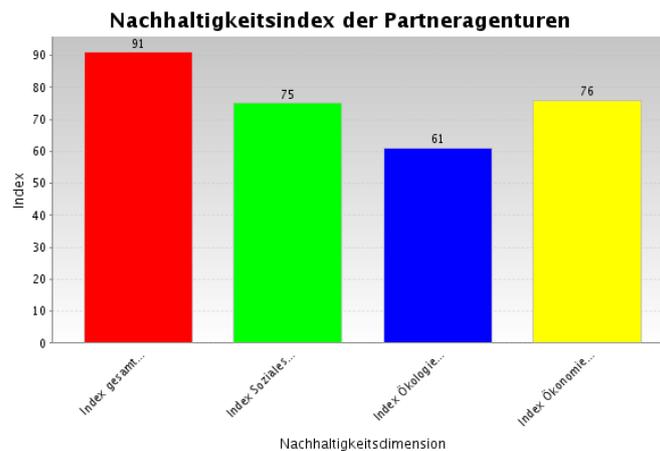
7.2.1 Partner agencies

The most important partner agency for the whale watching excursions is OCEANO Gomera S.L.

Another important partner agency is a local travel agency (Viajes Integrados) where we book most of the accommodation on La Gomera. It is important to us working with locally owned apartment complexes and that they are small, individual and well serviced apartments offering their employees permanent contracts.

On the Azores we work together with our partner Aqua Acores for the whale watching excursions and partly also for the reservation of apartments. We prefer companies that support sustainability and conservation and gladly support local conservational projects through donations or other contribution.

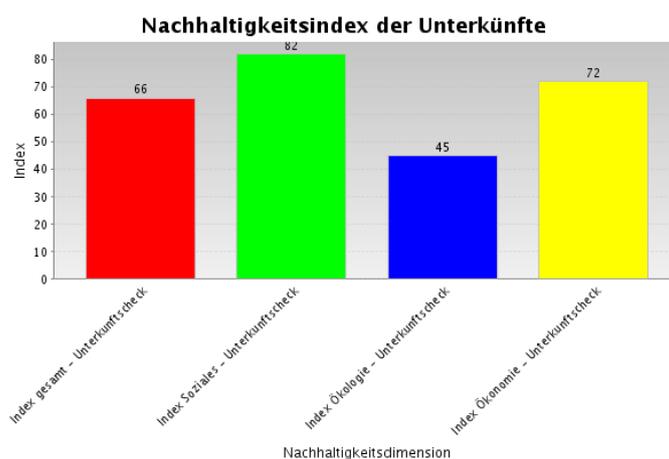
OCEANO Gomera S.L. and Viajes Integrados were evaluated.



7.2.2 Accommodation

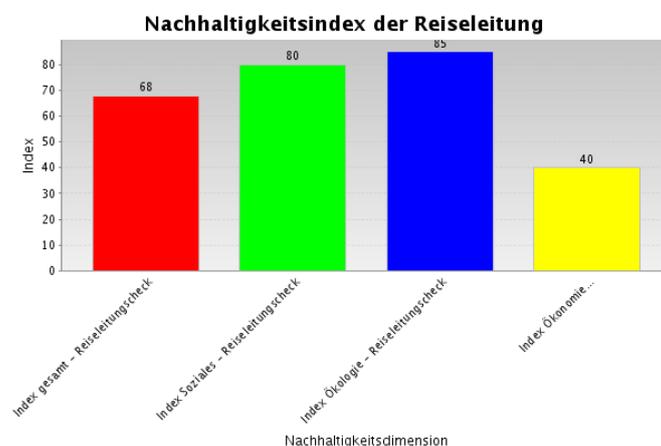
OCEANO mainly works together with one travel agency for the apartment reservations which are made for the Oceanic Weeks Classic and other individually travelling clients. The apartments and houses are owned to 90% by local families. We cooperate directly with one apartment owner originating in Venezuela who now lives with her family on La Gomera. Both apartment complexes we mainly work with were evaluated.

Unfortunately, ecological topics are still underdeveloped on the Canary Islands and are not very present in the public interest. A positive fact is that almost all of the complexes use solar panels to heat the water for their apartments.



7.2.3 Tour guides

In 2008, 100% of our travel groups and individual clients were looked after by tour guides from our own company OCEANO. There is one chief tour guide but all of the other OCEANO employees also perform tour guide duties. The economical share is rather small as we do not employ any local guides. Our clients are mainly German and English speaking and there are hardly any local tour guides with the knowledge of both languages. Furthermore, there are only very few possibilities for in-service training. Trainings abroad are still too expensive for OCEANO at this time.



7.2.4. Transport

In most cases we were not able to check whether our clients had offset their carbon emissions through atmosfair. We assume however, that not many have made use of this possibility up to now. Thus, the number stated is only an estimation. Every participant of the Oceanic Week Classic has 3 whale watching tours per week on a former fishing boat or a sailing yacht and a guided island tour by car. It is not necessary to rent a car in Valle Gran Rey as all facilities are within easy walking distance.

We do not book any flights for our clients.

Since 2009 we increasingly point out atmosfair on our website and in our catalogue. The "Oceanic Fair Packet" with the possibility to offset carbon emissions and make a donation for M.E.E.R. e.V. is additionally bookable.

Number of travellers with atmosfair carbon offset	4

	Km
Total of flight kilometres	735961
Average flight kilometres per traveller	6571,1

	Grams
CO ² -Emissions/client/day	221841.6

COMPANY INFORMATION

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Core indicators

CO ² emissions per client/day (in Grams)	221841
Corporate ecology: CO ² emissions per employee (in Gram)	7300
Share of total travel price flowing into the destination country (in %)	61,9
Quality of client information (Index in %)	72,0
Customer satisfaction index and response rate (in %)	98,0 / 95,0
Company culture: Satisfaction index employees (in %)	80,0
Company success: Cash Flow of the company (turnover share in %)	
Sustainability index accommodation (in %)	66,0
Sustainability index tour guides (in %)	68,0
Sustainability index Partner agencies (in %)	91,0

(* The indices in percent are based on a scale of 10% = lowest value to 100% = highest value)

Our sustainability report was compiled according to the report standards of TourCert and verified by an independent panel of experts and reviewers. www.tourcert.org

