

EMILY DOWNES

CONTACT



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www.emilydownes.travel



Bristol, UK - available for remote work & open to temporary relocation abroad

EDUCATION

International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT Global)

Oct 2025 - Jan 2026

Professional Certificate in Responsible Tourism - run by Harold Goodwin

University of Cambridge

2010-2014

BA, MA Cantab

Modern & Medieval Languages - Spanish & linguistics

Grade II.1

Our Lady's Abingdon

2003-2010

Scholarship

A levels: all A*; GCSEs: 8 A* & 4 A

Top 10 French & Spanish GCSE results in England

- I'd been learning Spanish 6 months

EXPERTISE

- Sustainability reporting & strategy; driving internal sustainability initiatives
- Sustainable product development across wide range of destinations & variety of source markets
- B2B partnerships & contracting across different legal frameworks
- European buyer requirements
- Strategic insight into scaling
- Deep knowledge of travel industry market trends

SKILLS

- Organisation & aptitude for implementing process & bringing structure to growing business environment
- Building strong international business relationships with clear focus on impact & performance
- Capacity building with SMEs worldwide
- Commercial & data-driven focus
- Project management, taking ownership & delivering on results
- Verified 'power user' on ClickUp (task/project management tool) - embrace new tools

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Early employee at start-up founded on ethos of tourism benefiting local destination economies
- Expanding supply base & implementing processes to enable significant growth at scale-up
- Building business relationships & capacity building with hundreds of DMCs worldwide
- Achieving B Corp certification for TravelLocal
- Developing sustainability & commercial strategy
- Trade promotion work to develop sustainable tourism to lesser-visited countries

PROFILE

Commercially grounded travel product and sustainable tourism leader with over a decade in the industry. Experience leading on product and sustainability at high-growth platform disrupting traditional tour operator model and as a consultant supporting DMCs with capacity building and European market readiness. Lead coach and auditor for Travelife in the UK.

Particular areas of interest:

- Sustainable tourism development in emerging destinations
- Fair trade in tourism, decolonisation, empowering supply-side SMEs and strengthening value chains to maximise local economic linkage
- Behavioural economics: making sustainability the default and removing friction in order to bridge the say-do gap

Open to both in-house roles and consulting projects.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Sustainable Tourism Consultant (freelance)

Jan 2025 - present

I support DMCs and other tourism SMEs with capacity building for European market readiness, sustainability and product development. Clients include:

Import Promotion Desk

- Coaching, capacity building & European market access for DMCs, with a focus on matchmaking with European buyers at ITB & WTM
- Co-leading Tunisia FAM 2026: developing itinerary, liaising with tourist board, promoting to European tour operators and preparing local SMEs for success

Mauritius Conscious - boutique inbound tour operator focused on responsible tourism, showcasing a more authentic side to the island

- Worked closely with the managing director on strategy to grow trade partnerships for small group adventures and FITs
- Developed product and partnerships for UHNW clients, including contracting of high-end accommodations
- Developed agent hub for trade partners

TransAfrica - inbound tour operator covering 12 countries across West Africa

- Developed sustainability communication strategy

Adventure Travel Networking (ATN)

- Support with connecting delegates during 2026 conference

TogeZer - platform connecting French travel agencies with local DMCs worldwide

- Provided strategic insights for UK launch
- Worked with selected group of DMCs to facilitate UK market readiness & access
- Capacity building on UK market travel trends, regulations & buyer expectations
- Promotion of Angola to UK travel trade (prior to Visit Angola campaign launch)
- Organised debut DMC/buyer networking event WTM 2025

Coach & Auditor (freelance) - Travelife for Tour Operators

Jan 2025 - present

- Main coach & auditor for Travelife in the UK
- As a coach, working with tour operators & DMCs to help them achieve Travelife Partner or Certified by explaining requirements, advising on responsible operations, and reviewing sustainability reports including sustainability policies & action plans
- Running group coaching sessions for Travelife x Evaneos partnership
- As an auditor, conducting on-site audits to make recommendations to Travelife as to whether the tour operator/DMC can be Travelife Certified

Travel Product & Commercial Lead - TravelLocal

Jan 2024 - Oct 2024

Role:

- Led small team responsible for new DMC partner onboarding & full travel product portfolio including new destination launches in US, UK & German source markets
- Co-lead on Sustainability & Ethics Strategic Implementation Group, driving & implementing sustainability strategy internally & with partners worldwide
- Market awareness, trend forecasting & identifying commercial opportunities
- Commercial strategy: ensuring aligned price point with new partners, overseeing sample itinerary pricing on website & setting dynamic commission strategy; implemented regular competitor pricing analysis framework
- Project management collaborating with cross-functional teams to integrate commercial & sustainability objectives into business operations
- B2B brand ambassador for industry associations & DMC representation agencies
- Legal & operational due diligence of full DMC partner base

EMILY DOWNES

OUTSIDE OF WORK

- Chapter Lead for local Travel Massive travel networking group
- Avid traveller - I've visited around 90 countries
- Stay active with tennis, salsa & dance fitness - Zumba instructor 2021-2024
- Volunteer as Head of Travel Industry Strategy with charity Bumprints, empowering passengers to reduce their flight emissions

LANGUAGES

English Native fluency
Spanish C1
French B1
Italian A2

REFERENCES

Huw Owen - co-founder at TravelLocal

+44 7882 090 311

huw@hawkfieldpartners.com

Gerald Ami - managing director - Mauritius Conscious

+230 5488 9401

gerald@mauritiuscscious.com

Please also see my recommendations on LinkedIn

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE - CONTINUED

- Worked with complex in-house raw data sets & Google Travel Analytics Centre to gauge demand & trends

Achievements:

- Helped to develop internal 'destination tiering' tool to enable strategic growth decisions to be made based on profitability whilst also flagging supply gaps
- Proposed business cases to implement variable commission rates by product type (e.g. for flights, to unlock additional £1m annual revenue), booking value & market; worked on commercial case for partner kickbacks scheme
- Part of team who achieved B Corp certification for the business
- Development of internal frameworks to track & improve sustainability, e.g. internal Impact Score, Partner Charter (set of sustainability standards), Climate Action Plan (Glasgow Declaration reporting), defined local ethos policy, refined sustainable staff travel policy

Travel Product Development Manager - TravelLocal

Role: Aug 2021 - Dec 2023

- Decision maker for all new local DMC partnerships
- Responsible for ensuring excellent destination coverage & partner capacity for growth across US, UK & German markets, working closely with partner relationship & marketing teams
- Consulted in strategy for scaling supply base within forecasting
- Ownership of partner contracting across two legal entities (UK & German) and full onboarding process for new DMC partnerships
- Responsible for travel product coverage of ~2000 sample itineraries across >100 destinations & 3 customer markets on the TravelLocal website, including monitoring performance metrics
- Ownership of annual undertakings (operational due diligence of partners)
- Built B2B relationships with various trade associations & DMC representation agencies such as Import Promotion Desk, the Adventure Connection & Adventure Travel Trade Association
- Built out travel product team

Achievements:

- Ensured solid supply base to enable 100% growth from £21m revenue in 2019 to £42m in 2023
- Onboarded ~25% of supply base (approx 60 DMCs) & launched 15 new destinations on the TravelLocal website; resulting in £10m gross booking value
- Onboarding consistently top rated area of partner experience in feedback survey
- Implemented commission increase to unlock £1.5m additional annual net revenue, including consulting with senior leadership team, presenting to board, project managing partner communications and roll out, and close monitoring of results (no negative impact on sales funnel)
- Coordinated UK market re-launch destination coverage post-covid
- Implementation of changes to booking terms & conditions following market research across UK, US & German source markets; consulted in changes to partner payment terms
- Achieved Travelife Partner award for the business (managed all reporting)

Customer & Product Executive - TravelLocal

Nov 2020 - Jul 2021

- Supported with selection, sign-up & onboarding of new DMC partners
- Curation of sample itineraries for website
- Risk assessment & sign off on partner payments during pandemic
- Other projects such as: coordinating travel (navigating covid restrictions) for staff offsite events & crew to shoot TV advert; coordinated partners' migration from old platform to new following merger with trip.me; ran all social media

Customer Experience Executive - TravelLocal

Sept 2018 - Oct 2020

- Handling day-to-day customer & partner queries
- Single-handedly managed all customer & partner communication during first 2 months of the pandemic - NPS 92 & Which? recommended
- Account management of DMCs in Africa, the Middle East & Europe
- Developed partner training suite & delivered training online & in-person e.g. visiting DMC offices in Kenya & Tanzania
- Implemented international flights offering, navigating terms & legalities with supplier

Mixed Fleet Cabin Crew - British Airways

Jul 2016 - Aug 2018

- Safety & security including aviation medicine, conflict management & emergency procedures; customer service from economy to first class
- Short & long haul on a variety of aircraft
- Followed strict operating standards whilst still being able to take the initiative depending on situation onboard

Travel Consultant - Noble Caledonia

Sept 2014 - Feb 2016

- Overseeing bookings from initial enquiry to departure for a variety of tours (sea & river cruises, land tours; across all 6 continents)
- Liaising with suppliers, operations & customers; use of in-house reservations & CRM systems