

Questions to be asked of a 3rd party provider

This is a recommended list of question developed though the RGS (IGB), YET, EPA and the expedition industry. The questions are not definitive and act as a starting point for investigation.

The crux is to demonstrate due diligence in selecting a provider. This should include comparing a number of providers and selecting the one that best meets your needs.

Philosophy

- Does the provider's philosophy link to your expedition group's needs and objectives? For example personal development, adventure, cultural etc.
- Is anyone excluded from your programmes?

Leadership

- What level of experience do your leaders have?
- What is their experience of the particular environment?
- Are your leaders used to working with your specific age group?
- Do you agree the leader team and meet them before the trip?
- Do you have the opportunity to develop the leader team and confirm roles (Leader, staff members assistant leader) prior to the trip?

Finances

- How are your funds protected?
- Is the provider an ATOL holder and how are the air travel funds protected?
- What are the terms and conditions financially should the area become politically / medically unsafe for travel?
- Does the company help team members to raise funds for their expedition?
- Does the company provide a breakdown of where all funds are spent?

Legal

- Does the school have a contract with the provider to enable quality to be ensured and responsibilities to be clearly stated and at what stage does the school have to sign the contract?
- Does the provider have professional indemnity and public liability insurance in place?
- Does the provider recommend / provide travel insurance?

Safety

- Are the staff to student ratio's agreed with the school?
- Can the company provide outline risk assessments and mitigation measures
- Is the risk assessment and Emergency Response Plan compiled by the Expedition Leader, the office or someone else?
- Does the risk assessment process engage all individuals involved: company base, leaders, staff and pupils as well as where necessary with local guides?
- Are the moving vehicles used by the provider during the journey licensed as a minimum requirement in line with the in-country laws? If there is no licensing system, or deemed to be inadequate how are vehicles checked and maintained?

- Is there a clear Emergency Response Plan? E.g. where is the nearest appropriate hospital and what is the method of travel to get there?
- What kind of medical help (via the insurance company for example) is available to the team while in-country?
- Request details of: any previous accidents / incidents / Child protection Policy.
- What is the company's minimum first aid requirement for leaders?
- Do the leaders carry any kind of communication systems while on expedition?
- Does the company have a 24 hour on-call back-up system running at the office while the team are on expedition?
- Do the Expedition Leaders have experience of the country that they are taking the team to? Does the company complete a recce to that country before-hand?
- Does the company have in-country agents in place in the destination to be visited?

Training

- Does the company run any training for the team prior to departure (with or without their leader)?
- Does the company run any training for the Expedition Leader?
- If during training the teams expedition goals become clearly unachievable how will the provider deal with this?

Support

- Who is the named person in the UK office to deal with directly?
- Will this person offer the support you require?

Background Checks

- Request and contact 2 referees who could be contacted from other schools/youth groups who have travelled with you within the last 18 months?