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**PRESS STATEMENT**

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**Volunteers trek the Sahara to raise funds for responsible gambling charity**

A team of 21 volunteers will trek the Sahara Desert next week to raise funds for the UK's leading problem gambling treatment charity.

The team will be walking for 5 days from the "Door of the Desert" at Achbarou to Anoun El Fraolia, crossing 100 kilometres of dunes and open desert. The volunteers aim to raise more than £45,000 for the Responsible Gambling Trust, the UK's leading funder of research, education and treatment of problem gambling.

This is the Responsible Gambling Trust's second annual fundraising expedition. Last year volunteers raised more than £70,000 by trekking up the world's highest free-standing mountain, Mount Kilimanjaro.

Marc Etches, Chief Executive of the Responsible Gambling Trust, will also be taking part in the trek. He said:

"I am delighted that so many from the gambling industry have volunteered to take part in what promises to be a gruelling challenge. The money we raise will help to build civil society's knowledge of the harm caused by problem gambling and put in place the education and treatment services that minimise that harm.

"Our annual trek is fast becoming a flagship fundraising event for the Responsible Gambling Trust and everybody who cares about minimising gambling-related harm."

**-ENDS-**

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

- Volunteers will fly out on 22 March and return to the UK on 29 March.
- The participants are: Martin Batten (Wagermill), Matthew Carey (NBGA), Laurence Carpenter (New Coronet Bingo Club), Marc Etches (Responsible Gambling Trust), Philip Gibbs (Praesepe), Lyn Murphy (Freddie Williams Bookmakers), Mark Wilson (Genting UK plc), Lauren Taylor, Angus Nisbet, Phillip Le Feuvre, Mark Kemp and Andrew Hicks (Coral Team - Sahara Trek), Lyndsay Wright, Kate Miller, Deborah Nash, Hadyn Bratt, Craig Connolly and Brian Whyte (William Hill PLC), Caroline Manie and Amy Lowing (William Hill Australia), and Robert Davies (William Hill On-Line).
- The Responsible Gambling Trust is the leading charity in the UK committed to minimising gambling-related harm. As an independent national charity funded by donations from the gambling industry, the Responsible Gambling Trust funds education, prevention and treatment services and commissions research to broaden public understanding of gambling-related harm. The aim is to stop people getting into problems with their gambling, and ensure that those that do develop problems receive fast and effective treatment and support. ([www.responsiblegamblingtrust.org.uk](http://www.responsiblegamblingtrust.org.uk)).
- The Responsible Gambling Trust raises a minimum of £5 million each year from the gambling industry operating in Britain within a voluntary (donation based) system and funds research, education, prevention and treatment services. Funding priorities are guided by the national strategy advised by the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) and endorsed by the Gambling Commission.
- The Responsible Gambling Trust remains hopeful of reaching an overall fundraising target of £6 million in the current 2013/14 fundraising year.