



SUSTAINABILITY
POLICY
OF
EXPLORE
HAKONE



This policy statement and/or the procedures for its implementation may be altered at any time by Explore Hakone (“the Company”). The statement and the procedures are to be reviewed at the end of the fiscal year in March by the Company.

As a tour operator and travel agency who engages with various stakeholders in tourism - customers, tour guides, partner agencies, hotels, transport-companies, restaurants, attractions and local communities, Explore Hakone understands our important role and influence in the sustainable development of tourism.

Therefore, we are committed to promoting sustainability. We aim to follow, implement and promote good sustainability practices to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts on our operations in tourism, and to inspire our customers and partners to have awareness and act within the same principals.

Our sustainability policy is covers 9 areas. Each theme consists of a set of principles and practical actions set accordingly.

1. Sustainability Management & Legal Compliance

We commit to sustainability management, practiced by these following actions:

- To have an appointed employee who is responsible for sustainability coordinator tasks.
- To have a sustainability mission statement that is communicated to customers, partners, suppliers and local communities.
- To have an accessible and written sustainability policy that aims for a reduction of the negative social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of the company's activities, and includes employee related health and safety aspects.
- To collaborate and be actively involved in external forums and working groups which are supportive of sustainability in tourism.
- To conduct a baseline assessment of the company's performance in sustainable practices.
- To have a sustainability action-plan - clear targets, actions, measures, responsibilities and time frame.
- To develop documented procedures in which the implementation of sustainability policy, objectives and targets are monitored and evaluated.
- To ensure the company's transparency in sustainability is maintained by applying public reporting and communicating.

- To donate 1% of our sales generated by our tours (excluding tax) to the local environmental protection fund at the end of each fiscal year in March.
- To ensure that all staff are fully aware of our Sustainability Policy and are committed to implementing and improving it.

We commit to complying with all National legislation, regulations and codes of practice.

2. Internal Management: Social Policy & Human Rights

We commit to sustainable internal management by having clearly written and well-communicated social policy that includes the following principles:

- To grant employees the freedom of employment and contract termination with notice (ideally minimum of 90 days) and without penalty.
- To include labor conditions according to Labor Standards Act and a job description in the employment contract.
- Wage rate is to be mentioned in the contract and equals or is above the prefectural legal minimum wages.
- To determine and compensate overtime working hours based on mutual agreement.
- To provide medical and liability insurance according to National law.
- To grant employees fixed paid yearly holidays and sick leave, and unpaid annual leave allowance.
- To have health and safety policy for employees which complies to National legal standards.
- To have first aid kits and trained staff available at all relevant locations.
- To comply with National Law concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment.
- To have a measurement system for employee satisfaction on a regular basis such as periodical meetings.
- To provide periodic guidance and training for employees on individual roles, rights and responsibilities regarding health and safety issues. This includes guidance regarding fire and other relevant natural disaster.

We commit to exercising human rights by ensuring the enforcement of the following:

- To declare not to hinder trade union membership, collective labor negotiations, and representation of members by trade unions.
- To prohibit discriminations with regard to recruitment, conditions of employment, access to training and senior positions, or promotion in terms of gender, race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion/beliefs or sexual orientation.
- To ensure all employees have equal prospects and access to resources and opportunity for personal development through regular training and education.

3. Internal Management: Environment and Community Relations

We commit to practice environmental protection and enhance community relations by ensuring the enforcement of the following:

- To actively reduce the use of disposable goods- bring your own bag (BYOB) instead of plastic bags, ceramic or reusable dishware/drinkware/cutlery instead of plastic products, rechargeable batteries instead of single-use, electronic communications instead of prints, reusable drink bottles instead of plastic.
- To implement sustainable purchasing policy in favor of sustainable goods and services for office and catering supply, giveaways and merchandise.
 - We prefer products which have been locally produced.
 - We buy from local suppliers when possible.
 - We prefer to work with local suppliers.
 - We prefer to work with service providers who have a sustainability reputation.
 - We try to figure out how much of our purchases meet the five R's: Reduce, Repair, Repurpose, Reuse, Recycle.
 - We consider possible sustainable alternatives.
 - We compare these alternatives for price, quality, and availability.
 - We commit ourselves to buy the most sustainable alternative in relation to the above factors.
- To set copy and printing machines to double-sided, 1 color printing, and toner saving modes by default.
- To use cleaning materials which are non-hazardous, non-eutrophic and biodegradable and are certified with an eco-label, if locally available.

- To print brochures, when necessary, on environmentally friendly paper, with a printing company that works with a certified environmental management system, if locally available at reasonable cost.
- To implement measurements to reduce brochure wastage or an 'internet only' policy.
- To have an active commitment to measure, monitor and reduce energy consumption.
- To purchase green energy and energy efficient lighting for all areas, when available.
- To switch off lights and equipment when not in use.
- To prefer low energy equipment when buying new items, including consideration of cost and quality.
- To have an active policy to reduce water consumption.
- To install water saving equipment in toilets.
- To reduce the amount of (non-refillable) plastic bottles of drinking water for office use.
- To separate all waste material which can be recycled and organize collection and proper disposal.
- To implement waste reducing methods when using ink and toner cartridges for printing and copying, whenever feasible.
- To recycle or properly dispose of batteries.
- To comply with National legislation of wastewater treatment, which should be safely reused or released.
- To measure and reduce staff-related travel and use more sustainable modes of transport.
- To reduce transport related impacts by telework, tele/video meetings, work-at-home policies or other means.
- To maintain and properly check motorized company vehicles, to reduce emissions and energy use, and ensure they comply with legal emission standards.
- To contribute to the protection and preservation of local historical, archaeological, culturally, and spiritually important properties and sites, and not impede local residents' access.

4. Partner Agency

Based on an inventory of our key partner agencies, we have developed and implemented a policy to improve sustainability of our partner agencies. Our aim is to make sustainable development concrete to each and every partner within our business.

We commit to this by:

- Keeping a list of the sustainability practices of partner accommodations and agents.
- Only working with organizations who are truly implementing sustainability in their tourism policy.
- Minimizing the ecological footprint of the office by travelling mainly via public transport, working as paperless as possible, separating waste, and to make use of certified recycled paper.
- Paying attention to the local benefits of communities when selecting local accommodation and being aware of their social policy for employees.
- Raising awareness among key partners on matters of sustainable consumption by organizing (online) campaigns and training.
- Informing key partners on Travelife and National tourism standards.
- Having a cooperation contract including a list of the National code of conduct for local partners to encourage their practices towards sustainability.
- Regularly evaluating the sustainability practices of our key partners to ensure their practices are fully sustainable.
- Informing key partners about the travel companies' sustainability policy with which they are expected to comply, and/or communicate this to final customers where relevant.
- Including key sustainability clauses in contracts with inbound/receptive partners.
- Motivating incoming/inbound partners to participate in sustainability training for travel companies.
- Having a written contract with partner agencies.
- Including clauses in the partner contracts that enable contract partners to end the contractual agreement prematurely if the partner company does not take adequate measures to prevent sexual exploitation of children within the direct supply chain.

- Ensuring that partner companies comply with all relevant National laws protecting the rights of employees.

5. Transport

We try to ensure that vehicles used on tours do not cause more than average pollution. We believe that addressing transport is an important aspect of sustainable tourism, and we do our best to decrease the average pollution level.

We commit to this by;

- Selecting the most sustainable options considering price and comfort when selecting transport options to the given destination.
- Considering and giving preference to more sustainable alternatives when selecting transport options for transfers and excursions in the destinations, equally taking into account price, comfort, and practical considerations.

6. Excursions and Activities

We highly value the wildlife and the welfare of the natural habitat. We aim to offer tours that only leave a minor footprint. We are safeguarding the authenticity of local communities and the natural environment and are strongly against harming wildlife and polluting the environment.

We commit to this by;

- Advising guests as to local culture, nature and environment.
- Not offering any excursions that harm humans, animals, plants, natural resources such as water and energy, or which are socially and culturally unacceptable.
- Not offering any excursions in which wildlife is held captive, except for properly regulated activities in compliance with local, National, and international law.
- Not being involved with companies that harvest, consume, display, sell, or trade wildlife species unless it is part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilization is sustainable, and in compliance with local, National, and international law.

- Having skilled and/or certified guides to accompany our guests whilst in sensitive cultural or heritage sites, and ecologically sensitive destinations.
- Promoting and advising our guests on excursions and activities which directly involve and support local communities, by purchasing services or goods, traditional crafts, and local (food) production methods, or visiting social projects.
- Promoting and advising our guests on excursions and activities which support local environment and biodiversity, such as visiting protected areas or environmental protection projects.

7. Tour Leaders and Guides

We aim at involving as many local people as possible by employing them in our tourism business. We stand for a fair and safe working environment that supports and respects local communities.

We commit to this by;

- Ensuring that all employees have a written employment contract, including labor conditions and a job description, and fully understand the terms and conditions.
- Preferring to work with local tour leaders, local representatives, local tour guides, porters, drivers, cooks, and other local staff in case of equal ability, and provide training as required.
- Paying tour leaders, local representatives, guides, porters and other local staff contracted by us at a living wage that is equal to, or above the legal minimum or relevant industry standard.
- Ensuring that our tour guides, hosts, and other employees under contract are qualified and regularly trained.
- Having our tour leaders, local representatives and guides inform clients on relevant sustainability matters in the destination (e.g. protection of flora, fauna, and cultural heritage, resource use), social norms and values (e.g. tips, dressing code and photography) and human rights (e.g. sexual exploitation.)

8. Destination

We aim to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts at destination, to ensure the sustainable development is achieved and maintained at the places in which we operate.

We commit to this by:

- Considering sustainability aspects in the selection process of new destinations, and possibly offer alternative, non-mainstream destinations.
- Not selecting destinations in which tourism leads to structural negative local effects. (Unless the company's involvement results in clear counter-balancing effects.)
- Considering selection of new destinations, which are accessible through more sustainable means of transport.
- Complying with legally based spatial planning, protected areas and heritage regulations. Also, with destination management strategies of local, regional and National authorities.
- Supporting initiatives that improve the relationship between accommodation and local producers.
- Not promoting souvenirs which contain threatened flora and fauna species as indicated in the CITES treaty and the IUCN 'Red List,' or historic and archaeological artefacts (except as permitted by law.)

9. Customer Communication and Protection

Customers welfare and information are very important to us. At Explore Hakone, we ensure clear and consistent communication and high protection of personal information.

Prior to booking, we commit to this by:

- Ensuring that customer privacy is not compromised.
- Complying with relevant standards and codes of conduct in marketing and advertising messages, and not promise more than is delivered.
- Making product and price information clear, complete and accurate, with regard to the company, its products and services, including sustainability claims.

- Clearly informing (potential) direct customers, as to sustainability commitments and actions.

After booking and during holidays, we commit to this by:

- Providing information to consumers about the natural surroundings, local culture and existing cultural heritage in the holiday destination.
- Informing consumers about key sustainability aspects and issues in the destination and receive recommendations on how to make a positive contribution.
- Holding information on a contact person and a telephone number permanently available for emergency situations.
- Training personnel and keep guidelines available, on how to deal with emergency situations.
- Offering suggestions to clients to use local restaurants and shops (where appropriate.)
- Informing clients on sustainable transport options in destinations, when feasible.

After holidays, we commit to this by:

- Systematically measuring client satisfaction and take into account the results, for service and product improvements.
- Including sustainability as an integral part of the research into client satisfaction.
- Having clear procedures in case of complaint and concern from clients.