Thimphu, 27. October 2021

Sustainability Policy

As a travel agent who engages with various stakeholders in tourism, namely consumers, tour guides, travel agencies, hotels, transport companies, restaurants, and attractions, Druk Eye Tours & Travels understands the key role and influence in the sustainability 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 tourism of our operations and to influence our clients and partners to do the same.
Our sustainability policy is divided into 9 themes. Each theme consists of a set of principles and practical actions accordingly:

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1. Sustainability Management & Legal compliance

Druk Eye Tours & Travels commits to sustainability management by

- having a staff appointed who is responsible as a sustainability coordinator (Nadine Koch)
- having a sustainability mission statement that is communicated to customers, partners and suppliers
- having 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;
- having a sustainability action plan with clear targets, actions, measures, responsibilites and time planning;

- ensuring company's transparency in sustainability by public reporting and communicating at least every two years;
- ensuring that our customers, partners and suppliers are respecting and safeguarding the rights for children by forbidding and engaging stakeholders in the prevention of sexual exploitation of children.
- 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 clear written and well-communicated social policy that includes the following principles:

- To grant employees the freedom of employment and termination with notice (minimum 3 months) and without penalty
- To include labor conditions according to national labor law;
- To determinate and compensate of overtime working hours based on agreement;
- To provide medical insurance according to the national law / Trekking insurance for Trekking-crew;
- To grant employees fixed paid yearly holiday and sick leave and unpaid annual leave allowance;
- To have first aid sets;
- To obey national concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment;

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

- To declare not to hinder trade union membership, collective labor negotiations and representation of members by trade unions;
- To prohibit discriminations, 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 an equal chance and access to resources and opportunities for personal development through regular training, education;

3. Internal Management: Environment and community relations

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

Procurement

- Actively reduce the use of disposable and consumer goods;
- Favor the purchase of sustainable goods and services, office and catering supply, giveaways and merchandise;
- Utilize office paper use (internal and administrative use) with sustainable credentials (recycled, FSC or sustainably produced)
- Set copy and printing machines by default to double-sided printing or other forms of paper saving modes.

Energy

- Purchase green energy and energy efficient lighting for all areas, when available;
- Switch off lights and equipment when not in use;
- Prefer low energy equipment when buying new items, including considerations of cost and quality;
- Set all equipment by default to energy-saving mode.

Water

- Have an active policy to reduce water consumption, implemented and monitored on a monthly or yearly basis for benchmark purposes;

- Use sustainable water sourcing, which does not adversely affect environmental flows;
- If possible measure the office water use.

Waste management

- Comply with national legislation concerning waste disposal;
- Develop and implement a solid waste reduction and recycling policy;
- Proper dispose of batteries;
- Take action to reduce the amount of (non-refillable) plastic bottles of drinking water for office use;
- Separate all materials which can be recycled and organize collection and proper disposal;
- Implement waste reducing methods when using ink and toner cartridges for printing and copying, whenever feasible;
- Take measures to reduce the amount of packaging materials and not provide non-recyclable or non-biodegradable package materials;

Reducing pollution

- Comply with national legislation of wastewater treatment, which should be reused or released safely;
- Use cleaning materials which are non-hazardous, non-eutrophic and biodegradable and are certified with an eco-label, if locally available;
- Minimize and substitute the use of harmful substances, including pesticides, paints, and cleaning materials, by harmless products and processes. All storage, handling and disposal of chemicals has to be properly managed.

Mobility

- Reduce staff related travel;
- Check on the hired vehicles that they comply with the legal emission standards.

Sustainability training and awareness raising

- Provide information to all staff member about their role and responsibility with respect to internal environmental practices.

Land use

- Comply with land use, zoning and protected or heritage area laws and regulations, when planning, designing and constructing, renovating, oprating or demolishing company buildings and infrastructure;
- Take into account the capacity and integrity of protected and sensitive natural and cultural heritage when planning a new company building;
- Adopt locally appropriate and sustainable practices and materials in planning design, construction of new buildings or renovations.

Environment

- Contribute to the protection and preservation of local historical, archaeological, culturally, and spiritually important properties and sites.

4. Transport

We try to ensure that vehicles used on tours do not cause more than average pollution. We believe that 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 security and comfort when selecting transport options;
- Considering and giving preference to more sustainable alternatives when selecting transport options for transfers and excursions in the destination, taking into account price, comfort, and practical considerations;

- Integrating and/or promoting one or more sustainable holiday product/package based on a recognised methodology, including sustainable accommodations and sustainable activities.

5. Accommodations

We try to achieve a tourism supply chain that is fully sustainable. The partner accommodations play an important role in achieving this, and are stimulated and motivated to adapt sustainable practices.

We commit to this by;

- Giving clear perference to accomodations that work with internationally acknoledged (e.g. recognised) and/or Travelife certification; selecting accomodations that comply with sustainability and quality standards with a special focus on the following items:
    - Water saving program
    - Waste management program
    - Energy saving program
    - Energy reduction program
    - Training to employees in Health and safety
    - Sustainable supply chain
- Motivating and encouraging partner accommodations to become sustainably certified;
- Preferring and selecting accommodations that are locally owned and managed;
- Selecting accommodations that employ local communities;
- Encouraging accommodations to follow best practices/trainings on responsible tourism;
- Encouraging accommodations to fill in the sustainability questionnaire to gain insight in their practises;
- Clearly and actively communicating our sustainability objectives and requirements regarding accommodations to contracted and other relevant accommodations;
- Including standard sustainability clauses in all contracts with accommodation providers that focus on child labour, anti-corruption and bribery, waste management and protection of biodiversity;
- Ensuring that through our accommodation supply chain, the rights of children are respected and safeguarded by
    - a zero tolerance policy of sexual exploitation of children,
    - training employees in childrens rights, the prevention of sexual exploitation and how to report suspected cases;
    - having a clause dedicated to this aspect in the contract that enables us to end agreement prematurely if the accomodation supplier does not take adequate measures to prevent sexual exploitation of children.
- Working with accommodations and restaurants that incorporate elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage; while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities;
- Contracted accomodations are expected to limit their negative impact on local and global biodiversity, wherever feasible (e.g. not to offer red-listed species on the menu or advise on illegal souvenirs);
- Terminating cooperation with accommodation in case of clear evidence that contracted accommodations jeopardize the provision of integrity of basic services such as food, water, energy, healthcare, or soil to the neighbouring companies.;

6. Excursions and activities

We value animal and community welfare extremely highly and aim that tours leave little to no footprint. We are safeguarding the authenticity of the communities and the natural environment, and are strongly against harming wildlife and polluting the environment.

We commit to this by;

- Advising guests on behaviour standards during excursions and activities with a focus on respecting the local culture, nature, and environment;

- Communicating our sustainability objectives and requirements to contracted and other relevant excursion providers by distributing this information via code of conducts, representative agents, social media, email, discussions, and/or meetings, to minimise negative visitor impact and maximise enjoyment;
- 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 utilisation is sustainable and in compliance with local, national, and international law;
- Having TCB-licensed guides to guide our guests in sensitive cultural sites, heritage sites, or ecologically sensitive destinations;
- Promoting and advise 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, local representatives and guides

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

We commit to this by;

- Working 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;
- Ensuring that tour leaders, representatives, guides and other locally active staff, contracted by us, understand the terms and conditions of their employment, including remuneration.
- Ensuring that our local partners comply with all applicable international, national, and local laws and regulations, industry minimum standards, and any other relevant statutory requirements whichever requirements are more stringent;
- Paying tour leaders, local representatives, guides, porters and other local staff contracted by us at least a living wage that is equal to or above the legal minimum or relevant industry standard;
- Ensuring that our tour guides and drivers are qualified and trained regularly;
- Ensuring that the trekking staff hast he appropriate clothing and other equipment related for the excursions as listed in the Trekking Guideline prescribed by Tourism Council Bhutan (TCB) and ensure the national standard on trekking weight;
- Having tour leaders, 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, dress 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 of the places that we operate in.

We commit to this by:

- Comply with legally based spatial planning, protected areas and heritage regulations. Also with destination management strategies of local, regional and national authorities;
- Support initiatives that improve the relationships between accommodations and local producers;
- Support biodiversity conservation, including protected areas and areas of high biodiversity thru integration in product offers;

- Not to promote souvenirs which contain threatened flora and fauna species as indicated in the CITES treaty and the IUCN 'Red List'; or historic and archaeological artefacts indicated in the Tourism Rules & Regulations 2017 of Bhutan; and penal Code 2016, Section 24 (except as permitted by law);

9. Customer communication and protection

Customers welfare and information are very important to us. We ensure clear and constant communication and high protection to our clients.

Prior to booking, we commit to this by:

- Ensure that customer privacy is not compromised;
- Comply with relevant standards and voluntary codes of conduct in marketing and advertising messages, and not promise more than is delivered;
- Make product and price information clear, complete and accurate, with regard to the company and its products and services, including sustainability claims;
- Provide destination information, including sustainability aspects, which is factually correct, balanced and complete;
- Promote (certified) sustainable accommodations, excursions, packages and/or transport options, with logos or other messages; ensuring they are recognizable to consumer and presented as the "better" option;
- Inform the customer about sustainable alternatives concerning accommodations, excursions, package holidays, if available;
- Clearly inform (potential) direct customers, about sustainability commitments and actions;

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

- Provide Information to consumers about the natural surroundings, local culture and cultural heritage in the holiday destination;
- Inform consumers about key sustainability aspects and issues in the destination and receive recommendations on how to make a positive contribution;
- Inform customers about risks and precautions related to health and safety matters in the destination;
- Keep a contact person and a telephone number permanently available for emergency situations;
- Train personnel and keep guidelines available, on how to deal with emergency situations;
- Inform clients about applicable legislation concerning the purchasing, sales, import and export of historic or religious artefacts and articles containing materials of threatened flora and/or fauna in the destination;
- Motivate clients to use local restaurants and shops (where appropriate);
- Inform clients on sustainable options in destinations, when feasible;
- Encourage clients to donate to local charity and sustainable initiatives.

After holidays, we commit to this by:

- Measure systematically client satisfaction and take into account the results, for service and product improvements;
- Have clear procedures in case of complaints from clients.

Nadine Koch & Norbu Gyeltshen

Druk Eye Tours & Travels
Thimphu, Bhutan