



## SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Policy and procedures  
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(to be reviewed annually)

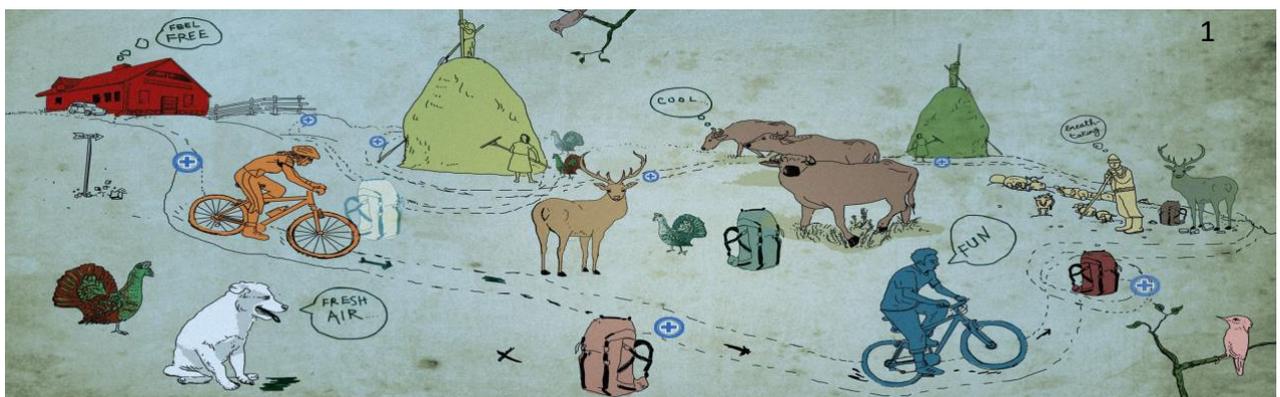


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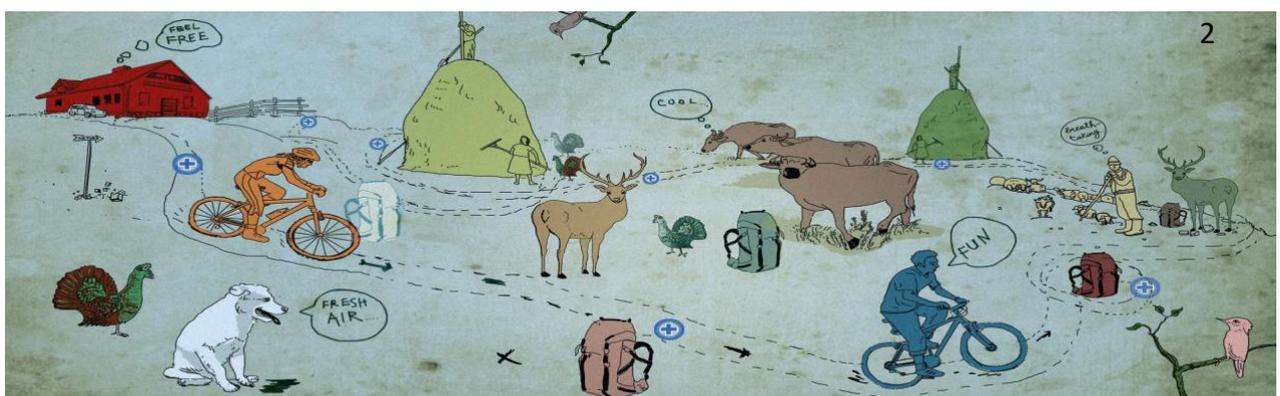
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## Introductory overview

What is 'SUSTAINABLE TOURISM' and why is this important?

The UNWTO defines sustainable tourism as “*tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities*”.

A sustainable approach essentially involves recognising that whilst tourism can provide many benefits, it also creates burdens which if not recognised and managed, place destinations and their future at risk. Sustainable tourism practices are therefore about planning, developing and managing tourism in a way that ensures that:

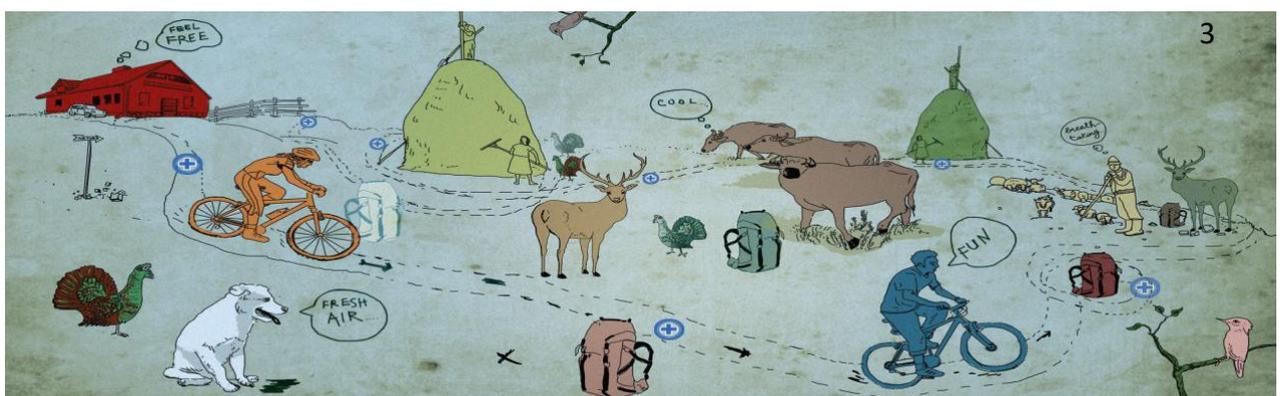
- Negative impacts are managed and minimised, and the net benefits tourism can create for places and people are enhanced;
- Natural resources are conserved, and biodiversity protected;
- Cultural traditions and heritage are respected, celebrated and preserved;
- Local economies and livelihoods are strengthened;
- The wellbeing and quality of life of communities are enhanced and they are involved in tourism decision-making.

Sustainable tourism is not a product, a niche, a market proposition or even a 'form' of tourism – all types of tourism can be made more sustainable. Neither does it connote a particular level of luxury or service (although arguably it offers a better visitor experience).

Importantly, sustainability is a process and not a goal – there is always more to achieve. It can be helpful to think of sustainability as a 'lens' through which to view all tourism activity, to consistently ensure that the way it is structured and delivered enhances rather than diminishes destinations as places to live, work, visit and enjoy.

Tourism can be a catalyst for growth in the local economy, providing good quality jobs, opportunities for enterprise and funds for conservation. But if it is not managed well, tourism can have negative impacts on local communities and environments, creating long term problems for local residents, which can ultimately lead to the decline of tourism in the destination. Tourism empowers communities and uplifts the economy. However, it poses social and environmental challenges, which in turn draws attention to tourism patterns.

Sustainable tourism promises protection of the environment and the social-cultural elements of any given destination.





## Mission and company ethos

Having been established on 2007, we are probably among the first local boutique companies in Romania focused on offering hand-crafted cycling trips in the country, from leisure cycling to road cycling adventures or epic mountain rides. In delivering these services we focus on authenticity, uniqueness, traditional local accommodation and local cuisine. We have also started developing a special series of bike&wine events to promote the amazing local Romanian wine destinations that have lately enchanted travellers all over the world.

Our **mission** - Inspire people of all ages to travel by bicycle as cycling may be one the most rewarding ways to interact with locals and truly experience local diversity, wildlife, culture and history.

By offering active cycling tours in remote and rural areas of our country, we create meaningful experiences by means of travel learn adventure and contribute to the long term health and well-being of local communities, preserving the natural environment, historical sites and destinations visited.

Our **vision** - become a catalyst of positive social, environmental and economic impact for the people and places we travel.

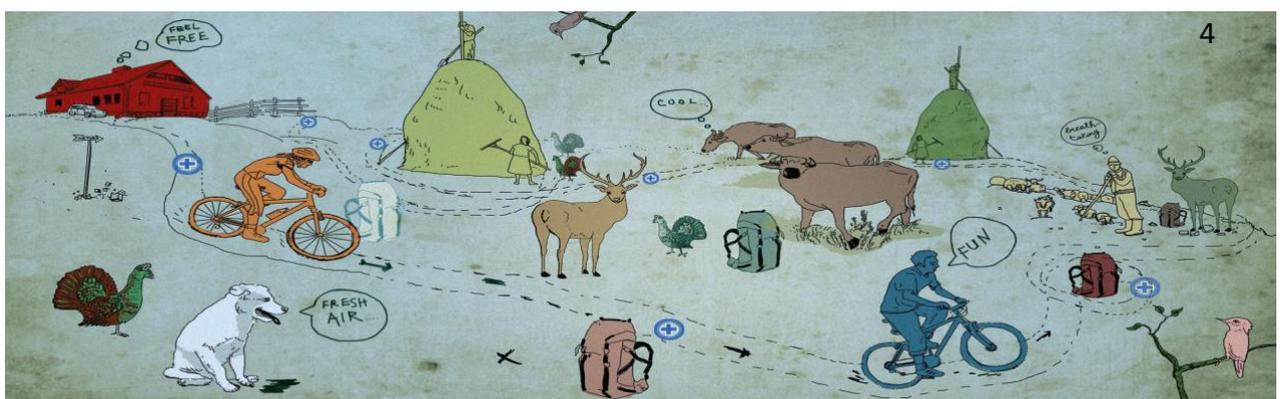
As a tour and bike rental company who engages with various stakeholders in tourism industry, namely consumers, tour guides and leaders, local experts, travel agencies, hotels, transport companies, restaurants and attractions, we understand our role and influence in the sustainability development of tourism. 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.

Therefore, we have taken the initiative and prepared the following handbook of policies and procedures with the purpose to improve our sustainability performance in the next 5 years.

Although sustainability practices are in our core values, we have started developing a real sustainability policy as part of the certification project initiated by Sustour and starting from the status of “engaged company” with the purpose to become a Travelife partner and furthermore, after two years ideally, to obtain the Travelife certified certification.

This policy is a working document which will be reviewed annually, updated as potential new efficiencies are available to us, and as we learn.

Our sustainability policy handbook follows the Travelife structure and is divided into **10 themes** with a set of principles and practical actions accordingly for each chapter. Where necessary a dedicated local procedure will be developed as part of the Travelife certification.



## 1. Sustainability Management & Legal compliance

We commit to sustainability management and take the following these following actions:

On a short term, the following two years, we aim to:

- To have an appointed employee who is responsible as the sustainability coordinator within the company;
- To have a sustainability mission statement that is communicated to customers, partners, suppliers and the general public;
- 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 conduct baseline assessment of the company's performance on sustainable practices;
- To have sustainability action plan with clear targets, actions, measures, responsibilities and time planning;
- To ensure company's transparency in sustainability by public reporting and communicating;
- To commit to comply with national legislation, regulations and codes of practice.

On a long term, the following 5 years, to strive:

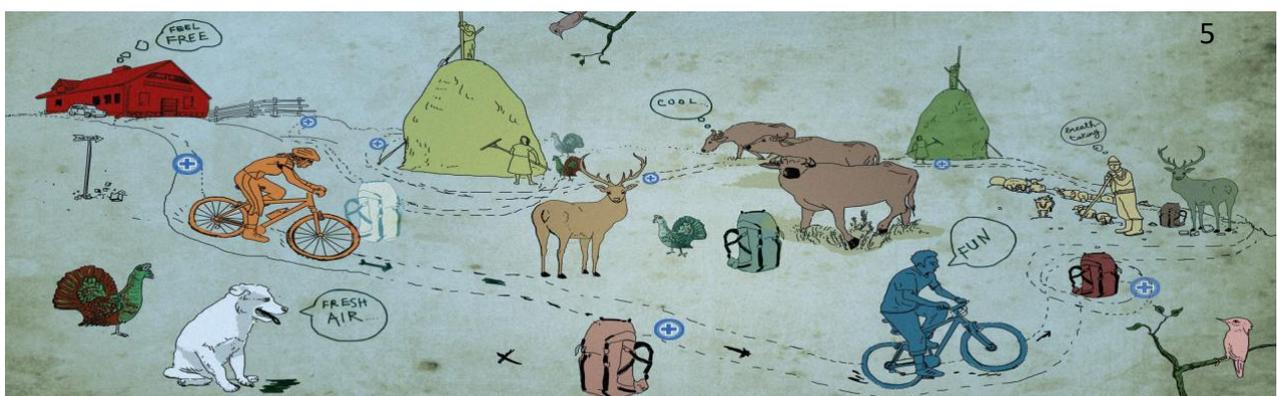
- To develop procedures to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the sustainability policy, objectives and targets;
- To have sustainability guidelines and assessment system in place to identify the sustainability performance of key suppliers/partners;
- To ensure that all staff are fully aware of our Sustainability Policy and are committed to implementing and improving it;
- To collaborate and actively involved in external forums and working groups which are supportive to sustainability in tourism;

## 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:

On a short time, the following two years:

- To grant employees the freedom of employment and contract termination with notice (ideally minimum one month) and without penalty;
- To include labour conditions according to national labour law and a job description in the employment contract;
- Wage rate is to be mentioned in the contract and equals or above the national minimum legal wage;
- To determinate and compensate of overtime working hours based on agreement;
- To provide health and social insurance benefits according to the national law;





- To grant employees fixed paid yearly holiday 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 sets and trained staff at all relevant locations;
- To provide periodic guidance and training for employees on roles, rights and responsibilities regarding health and safety issues. This includes fire and relevant natural disasters;
- 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, educational programmes;

On a long term, within 5 years and beyond, we strive to:

- To create opportunities for students in participating in traineeship/internship;
- To encourage employment opportunities for persons with special needs;
- To have documented effective procedures in place for employees to voice out their complaints and expectations;
- To have a clear disciplinary procedure that is effectively communicated with employees;
- To have a measurement system for employee satisfaction on a regular basis;

### 3. Internal Management: Environment and community relations

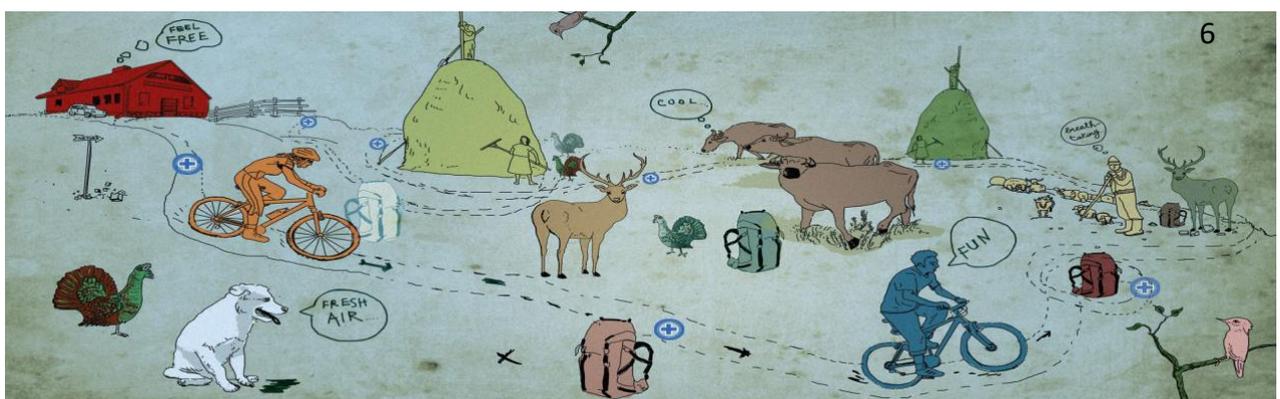
We commit to practice environmental protection and enhance community relations by ensuring the enforcement of following practices. This is part of a longer process which we aim to implement step by step over the following 5 years.

#### To reduce electricity usage:

- Use energy saving light bulbs (LEDs).
- Use only necessary appliances, replacing appliances at their end of life with higher energy efficiency appliances.
- Switch off lights and equipment when not in use, use automatic switch on/off system with timers or movement sensors and set equipment by default in the energy saving mode, where this is feasible;
- Switch off at socket/unplug all charging cables once rechargeable devices are fully charged. This includes but is not limited to: phones, laptops, headtorches, radios, power banks et;
- Prefer low energy equipment when buying new items, including considerations of cost and quality;
- Operate a work from home policy for admin work, and strongly encourage that home energy is sourced renewably, and that employees commit to complying with this consumption policy.

#### To reduce consumption:

- Actively reduce the use of disposable and consumer goods;





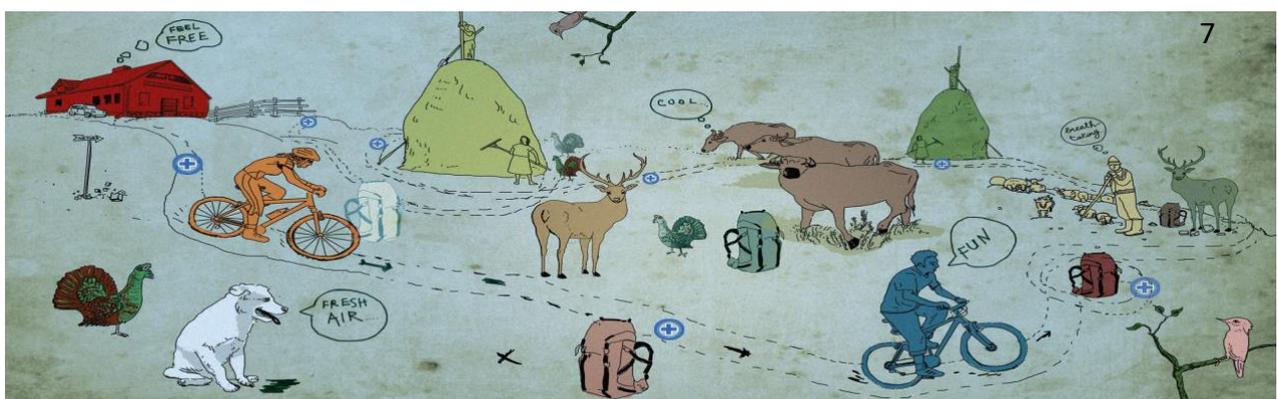
- Favor the purchase of sustainable goods and services, office and catering supply, giveaways and merchandise;
- Purchase products in bulk, to reduce the amount of packaging materials;
- Set copy and printing machines by default to double-sided printing or other forms of paper saving modes;
- Use cleaning materials which are non-hazardous, non-eutrophic and biodegradable and are certified with an eco-label, if locally available;
- Print brochures on environmentally friendly paper, with a printing company that works with a certified environmental management system, if locally available at reasonable costs;
- Implement measurements to reduce brochure wastage or an 'internet only' policy;
- Have an active commitment to measure, monitor and reduce energy consumption;
- Develop and implement a solid waste reduction and recycling policy, with quantitative goals;
- Take measures to reduce the amount of packaging materials and not provide non-recyclable or non-biodegradable package materials;
- Separate all materials which can be recycled and organize collection and proper disposal;

#### To reduce water consumption:

- Have an active policy to reduce water consumption, implemented and monitored on a yearly basis for benchmark purposes;
- Use sustainable water sourcing, which does not adversely affect environmental flows;
- Install water saving equipment in toilets, re-use waste water and/or collected rainwater;
- Comply with the national legislation concerning waste disposal;
- Take action to reduce the amount of (non-refillable) plastic bottles of drinking water for office use and during the tours.
- Comply with national legislation of wastewater treatment, which should be reused or released safely;

#### Ethical usage:

- The elimination of the use of single use plastic products in our business.
- Recycle or properly dispose of batteries.
- Sourcing equipment from manufacturers who produce their products responsibly, where possible from recycled material.
- Working with local, country-based suppliers first
- Minimize and substitute the use of harmful substances and manage properly the storage, handling, and disposal of chemicals.
- Measure and reduce staff related travel and use more sustainable modes of transport. Calculate its emissions, with the aim to reduce and compensate, through a reliable locally available program; We will use Carmacal app/tool to measure our carbon offset.
- Financially encourage employees to use public transport or sustainable means of transport.
- Reduce transport related impacts by tele-work, tele/video meetings, work-at-home policies, or other means.





- Ensure 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 and we do our best to decrease this. We work with companies that provide new cars that are less polluting, hybrid or electric cars when possible to reduce local pollution.

As this is an ongoing process, we try to improve continuously. Therefore we strive to:

- Include public transport such as train transfer to the point of departure for the international/long distance journey;
- Consider and give preference to more sustainable alternatives when selecting transport options for transfers and excursions in the destination, taking into account price, comfort, and practical considerations;
- integrate one or more sustainable holiday products/packages based on a recognised methodology, including sustainable transport, sustainable accommodations, and sustainable activities.

## 6. Accommodations

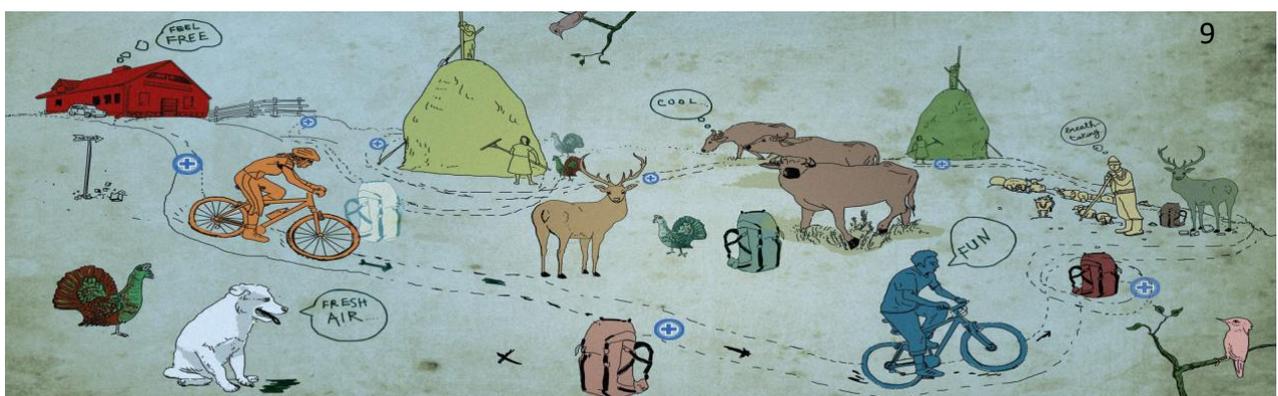
For the tourism business, partner accommodations play a crucial role in achieving a sustainable integrated approach but they need to be stimulated and adapt to these practices.

Even if not yet 100% , in our tours we are:

- 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;
- Working with accommodations and restaurants that incorporate elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage; while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities;
- Ensuring that through our accommodation supply chain, the rights of children are respected and safeguarded by;
  - Having a clause in contracts throughout the value chain stating a common repudiation and zero tolerance policy of sexual exploitation of children;
  - Having a clause dedicated to this aspect in their contract that enables the travel company to end the contractual agreement prematurely if the accommodation supplier does not take adequate measures to prevent sexual exploitation of children;
  - Training employees in children's rights, the prevention of sexual exploitation and how to report suspected cases;

On a longer term, in the following 5 years and beyond, we commit to:

- Selecting accommodations that comply with sustainability and quality standards with a special focus on the following items;
  - *Do they have a signed sustainability contract?*



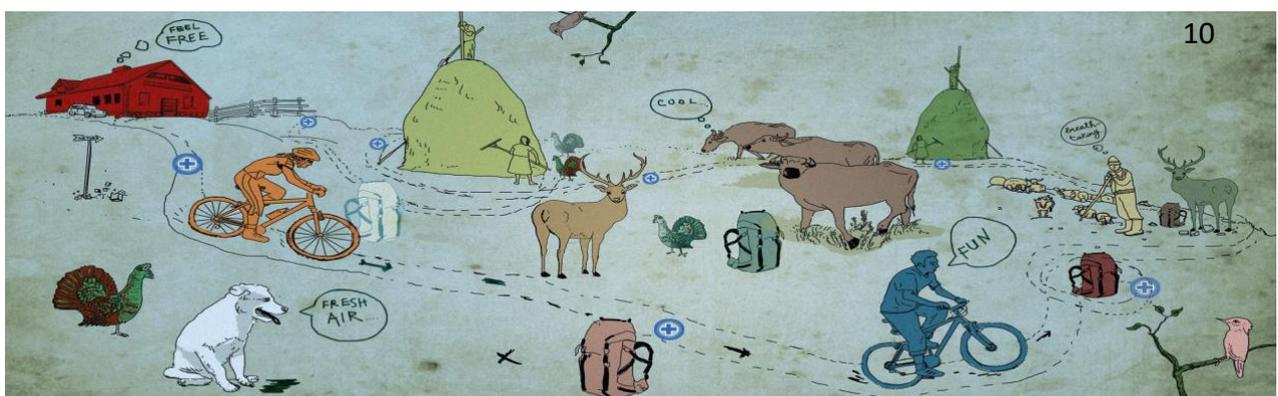
- Do they have a water saving program?
  - Do they have an energy saving program?
  - Do they have a waste management program?
  - Do they have an energy reduction system?
  - Do they have a sustainable supply chain?
  - Do they have a child protection policy?
  - Do they conduct CSR activities?
  - Do they train employees in Health & Safety?
- Motivating and encouraging partner accommodations to become sustainably certified;
  - Having accommodations sign a sustainability addendum;
  - Clearly and actively communicating our sustainability objectives and requirements regarding accommodations to contracted and other relevant accommodations;
  - Giving clear preference to accommodations that work with internationally acknowledged (e.g. GSTC recognised) and/or Travelife certification;
  - 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;
  - Offering incentives to accommodations that are actively engaging in sustainability;
  - 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.;

## 7. Trips and activities

We value animal and community welfare, aiming towards safeguarding the authenticity of the communities and the natural environment and we are strongly against harming wildlife and polluting the environment.

We commit to this by:

- Advising guests on behaviour standards during trips and activities with a focus on respecting the local culture, nature, and environment;
- Not offering any trips that harm humans, animals, plants, natural resources such as water and energy, or which are socially and culturally unacceptable;
- Not offering any trips 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 “use” is sustainable and in compliance with local, national, and international law;
- Having skilled and/or certified guides to guide our guests in sensitive cultural sites, heritage sites, or ecologically sensitive destinations;
- Promoting and advise our guests on trips 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 activities which support local environment and biodiversity such as visiting protected areas or environmental protection projects;

## 8. 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:

- Ensuring that all employees have a written employment or o services contract, including labour conditions and a job description;
- Preferring to work with local representatives, local tour guides, porters, drivers, and other local staff in case of equal ability, and provide training as required;
- 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, hosts, and other employees under contract are qualified and trained regularly;
- Ensuring that our local employees are informed on relevant aspects of our sustainability policy and comply with it, by newsletters, references or supplements to contracts, emails, or training and information sessions;
- 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);
- Training our employed tour leaders and local representatives on the avoidance of sexual exploitation of children.

On a long term, within 5 years and beyond we aim to:

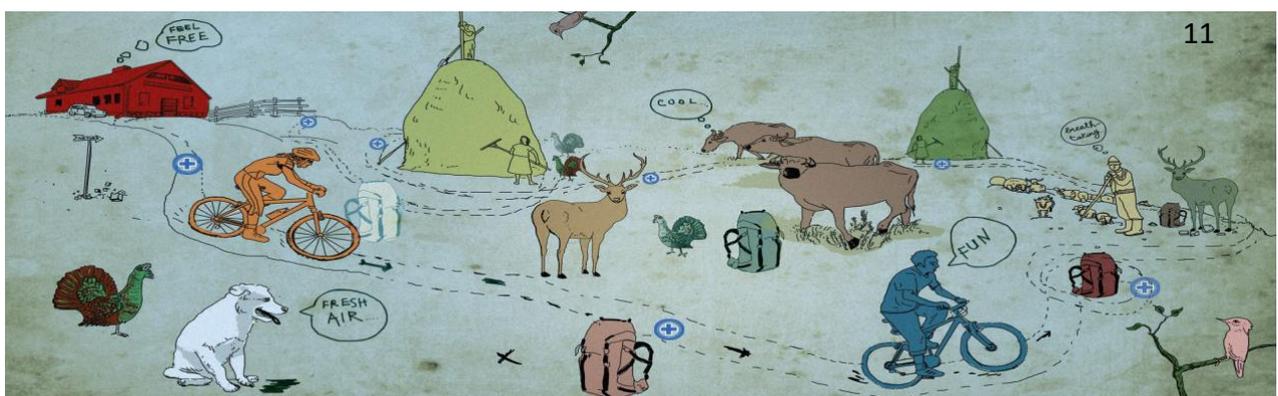
- Offer a special *sustainable travel* module in the trainings program for local tour guides and hosts, in which the main responsible tourism aspects are brought to attention followed by the role expected from the employees;

## 9. 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:

- Consider sustainability aspects in the selection process of new destinations and possibly offer alternative, less known destinations;



- 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;
- Influence and support local government (when possible, together with other travel companies and stakeholders) concerning sustainability, destination planning and management, use of natural resources and socio-cultural issues;
- Support biodiversity conservation, including protected areas and areas of high biodiversity, through financial contribution, political support, and integration in product offers;
- Not 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 (except as permitted by law);

## 10. Customer communication and protection

We take privacy and personal customer information very seriously and we make sure not to release any sensitive information that what is required by the law. Communication and, at the same time, high protection of our clients is of most importance.

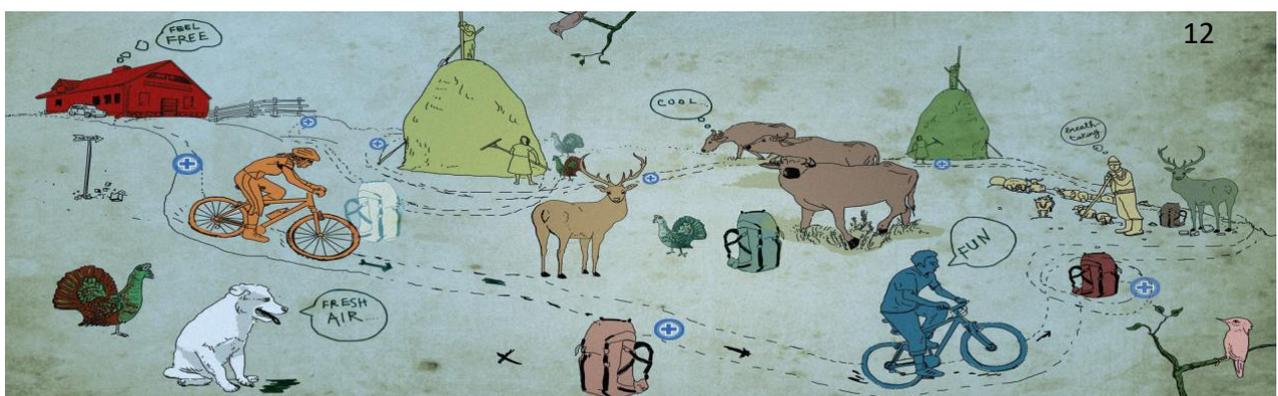
Our company ensures that no marketing and advertisement document, statement, or other publication, shall contain misleading information, over advertise and under deliver. We guarantee that all our staff are aware of and ensure that what is offered can be delivered to our clients with ease.

Prior to booking, we commit to:

- 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;
- Inform clients about the environmental impact of different transport options to reach the destination (in case these are not included in the package), and to offer sustainable alternatives, where available;
- Promote (Certified) sustainable accommodations, trips, packages and/or transport options, with logos or other messages; ensuring they are recognizable to consumer and presented as the "better" option;

After booking and during holidays, we commit to:

- Keep a contact person and a telephone number permanently available for emergency situations;
- Provide Information to consumers about the natural surroundings, local culture and cultural heritage in the holiday destination;
- Inform clients on sustainable transport options in destinations, when feasible;
- Encourage clients to donate to local charity and sustainable initiatives;
- Motivate clients to use local restaurants and shops (where appropriate);





- 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;
- Train personnel and keep guidelines available, on how to deal with emergency situations;
- Provide clients with documented guidelines and/or codes of conduct for sensitive excursions and activities, to minimize negative visitor impact and maximize enjoyment.
- Provide customers with information about commercial, sexual or any other form of exploitation and harassment, particularly of children and adolescents;
- 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;

After holidays, we commit:

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

For this we always use a client feedback form and a complaints procedure.

On a longer term, in a few years, we aim to include the sustainability topic as an integral part of the research into client satisfaction;

Drafted by:

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April 2023

