



**Offbeat Travel**  
authentic experiences

## **Sustainable policy and procedure handbook**

As a travel agency that engages with the various tourism stakeholders, namely consumers, tour guides, travel agencies, hotels, transport companies, restaurants and attractions, Offbeat Travel understands its key role and its influence in the sustainable development of tourism. Therefore, we are committed to promoting sustainability. We want to follow, implement and promote good sustainability practices in order to maximize the positive impacts and minimize the negative impacts of our activities on tourism and to encourage our customers and partners to do the same.

Our sustainability policy is divided into 10 themes. Each theme is made up of a set of principles and corresponding practical actions.

## 1. Sustainable development management and legal compliance

We are committed to sustainable management, practiced through the following actions:

- Have a designated employee who is responsible for sustainability coordinator tasks;
- Have an accessible and written sustainability policy that aims to reduce the negative social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of the company's activities, and that includes health and safety aspects related to employees;
- Collaborate and actively engage in external forums and working groups that support sustainability in tourism;
- Have sustainability guidelines and an assessment system in place to identify the sustainability performance of key suppliers/partners;
- Have a sustainability action plan with clear objectives, actions, measurements, responsibilities and time planning;
- Ensure company transparency in terms of sustainable development by communicating;
- Ensure that all staff are fully aware of our sustainability policy and committed to implementing and improving it.

We are committed to complying with all national legislation, regulations and codes of practice.

## 2. Internal management: social policy and human rights

We are committed to sustainable internal management by having a clear, written and well-communicated social policy, which includes the following principles:

- Grant employees' freedom of employment and termination of contract with notice (ideally a minimum of one month) and without penalty.
- Include working conditions in accordance with national labor law and a job description in the employment contract;
- The salary rate must be mentioned in the contract and is equal to or higher than the national legal salary;
- Determine and compensate additional working hours on the basis of an agreement;

- Provide medical and liability insurance in accordance with national legislation;
- Grant employees fixed paid annual leave and sick leave as well as unpaid annual leave compensation;
- Have a health and safety policy for employees that complies with national legal standards;
- Have first aid kits and trained staff at all relevant sites;
- Respect national provisions relating to the minimum age for admission to employment;
- Have effective procedures allowing employees to express their complaints and expectations;
- Create opportunities for students to participate in internships, internships and apprenticeships;
- Encourage employment opportunities for people with special needs;

We are committed to respecting human rights by ensuring the application of the following practices:

- Declare not to hinder union membership, collective labor negotiations and the representation of members by unions;
- Participate in and comply with a (sector-wide) collective bargaining structure for working conditions (if it exists locally).
- Prohibit discrimination in recruitment, conditions of employment, access to training and positions of responsibility, or promotion, based on sex, race, age, disability, origin ethnicity, religion/belief or sexual orientation;
- Ensure that all employees have equal opportunity and access to resources and opportunities for personal development through regular training, education;

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

We are committed to practicing environmental protection and improving community relations by ensuring the following practices:

- Actively reduce the use of disposable and consumer goods;
- Promote the purchase of durable goods and services, office and catering supplies, promotional gifts and merchandise;
- Buy products in bulk, to reduce the amount of packaging materials;
- Implement measures to reduce the waste of brochures or an “Internet only” policy;
- Actively engage in reducing energy consumption;
- Purchase green power and energy-efficient lighting for all areas, where possible;
- Turn off lights and equipment when not in use, use an automatic on-off system with timers or motion sensors, and set equipment to default power save mode, when that is possible ;

- Prioritize energy-efficient equipment when purchasing new items, taking into account cost and quality;
- Have an active water consumption reduction policy, implemented and monitored on a monthly or annual basis for evaluation purposes;
- Use sustainable water sources that do not harm environmental flows;
- Install water-saving devices in toilets, reuse wastewater and/or collected rainwater where possible;
- Comply with national legislation regarding waste disposal;
- Take steps to reduce the amount of packaging materials and not provide non-recyclable or non-biodegradable packaging materials;
- Take steps to reduce the amount of plastic (non-refillable) drinking water bottles used;
- Recycle or dispose of batteries properly;
- Comply with national legislation on the treatment of wastewater, which must be reused or safely discharged;
- Minimize and replace the use of harmful substances and properly manage the storage, handling and disposal of chemicals;
- Use lead-free and water-based paints, both indoors and outdoors, when locally available;
- Measure and reduce staff travel and use more sustainable modes of transport;
- Reduce travel-related impacts through telecommuting, tele/video meetings, work-from-home policies or other means;
- Periodically provide advice, training and/or information to all staff members on their roles and responsibilities regarding internal environmental practices;
- Contribute to the protection and preservation of historically, archaeologically, culturally and spiritually significant local properties and sites, and not impede access to them by local residents;

#### 4. Partners

Based on an inventory of our main partners, we have developed and implemented a policy to improve the sustainability of our partners. Our goal is to make sustainable development concrete for each of our company's partners.

We are committed in this sense to;

- Only work with organizations that actually implement sustainability in their tourism policy;
- Minimize the office's ecological footprint by traveling mainly by public transport, working paperless as much as possible, sorting waste and using certified recycled paper;
- Pay attention to the local benefits of communities when selecting local accommodations and their social policies for employees;

- Raising awareness of sustainable consumption among key partners by organizing (online) campaigns;
- Regularly assess the sustainability practices of our main partners to ensure that their practices are truly sustainable;
- Include key sustainability clauses in contracts with partners;
- Have a written contract with partner agencies;
- Ensure that partner companies comply with all relevant national laws protecting the rights of employees;

## 5. Transportation

We strive to ensure that vehicles used on tours do not cause above average pollution. We believe that transportation is an important aspect of sustainable tourism, and we do our best to reduce the average pollution level.

We are committed to this;

- 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;
- Incorporate and/or promote one or more sustainable vacation products/packages, including sustainable transportation, sustainable accommodation and sustainable activities.

## 6. Accommodation

We are striving to establish a fully sustainable tourism supply chain. Partner accommodations play an important role in this regard, and are stimulated and motivated to adapt sustainable practices.

We are committed to this;

- Select accommodation that meets sustainability and quality standards, paying particular attention to the following elements;
  - 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 consumption reduction system?
  - Do they have a sustainable supply chain?
  - Does it train its employees in health and safety?
- Motivate and encourage partner accommodation to obtain sustainable certification;
- Prefer and select accommodations that are locally owned and managed;
- Choose accommodation that employs local communities;

- Encourage accommodation to follow best practices/training in responsible tourism;
- Encourage accommodations to complete the sustainability questionnaire in order to better understand their practices;
- Give a clear preference to accommodation that works with internationally recognized certification (for example, recognized by the GSTC) and/or Travelife;
- Include standard sustainability clauses in all contracts with accommodation providers focusing on child labor, anti-corruption and bribery, waste management and protection of biodiversity;
- Work with accommodations and restaurants that incorporate elements of local art, architecture or cultural heritage, while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities;
- Terminate cooperation with accommodation in case of clear evidence that contracted accommodation jeopardizes the provision of integrity of basic services such as food, water, energy, health care , or the ground to neighboring companies...;

## 7. Excursions and activities

We take animal and community well-being very seriously and aim for tours that leave only a minor footprint. We safeguard the authenticity of communities and the natural environment, and are strongly opposed to any wildlife encroachment and environmental pollution.

We are committed in this sense to;

- Have an inventory of environmentally or culturally sensitive excursions that are offered in each destination;
- Advise clients on standards of behavior during excursions and activities, emphasizing respect for local culture, nature and the environment;
- Communicate our sustainability goals and requirements to contracted excursion providers and other relevant providers by disseminating this information through representative agents, social media, email, chat and/or or meetings, to minimize negative impact on visitors and maximize enjoyment;
- Not offer excursions that harm human beings, animals, plants, natural resources such as water and energy, or that are socially and culturally unacceptable;
- Have qualified and/or certified guides to guide our guests in sensitive cultural sites, heritage sites or environmentally sensitive destinations;
- Promote and advise our clients on excursions and activities that directly involve and support local communities through the purchase of services or goods, traditional crafts and local (food) production methods, or visiting social projects ;
- Promote and advise our clients on excursions and activities that support the local environment and biodiversity, such as visiting protected areas or environmental protection projects;

## 8. Tour leaders, local representatives and guides

We aim to involve as many locals as possible by employing them in the tourism business. We champion a fair and safe work environment that supports and respects local communities.

We are committed to this;

- Ensure that all employees have a written employment contract, including working conditions and a job description, and that they fully understand its terms and conditions;
- Work with local representatives, local tour guides, drivers, cooks and other local staff;
- Ensure that our local partners comply with all applicable international, national and local laws and regulations, minimum industry standards and any other relevant legal requirements, whichever is more stringent;
- Ensure that our local partners are informed of and comply with relevant aspects of our sustainability policy, through newsletters, contract references or supplements, emails or coaching sessions. training and information;
- Ensure that our tour leaders, local representatives and guides inform clients about relevant sustainability issues in the destination (e.g. protection of flora, fauna and cultural heritage, use of resources), social norms and values (eg, tipping, dress code and photography) and human rights ;

## 9. Destination

We seek to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts at destination to ensure the sustainable development of the places where we operate.

In this sense, we are committed to:

- Take into account the aspects of sustainability in the process of selecting new destinations and possibly propose alternative, non-traditional destinations;
- Do not select destinations in which tourism leads to structural negative local effects (unless the involvement of the company leads to clear offsetting effects);
- Propose destinations accessible by more sustainable means of transport;
- Comply with legal regulations regarding land use planning, protected areas and heritage. Also with the destination management strategies of local, regional and national authorities;
- Support initiatives that improve relations between accommodation and local producers;
- Support biodiversity conservation, including protected areas and areas of high biodiversity, through financial contribution, political support and integration into product offerings;

## 10. Communication and customer protection

The well-being and information of customers are very important to us. At Offbeat Travel, we ensure clear and constant communication and high protection for our customers.

Before booking, we undertake to:

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

After the reservation and during the holidays, we commit ourselves to this by:

- Provide information to consumers about the natural environment, local culture and cultural heritage of the holiday destination;
- Inform consumers about key sustainability issues and issues in the destination and receive recommendations on how to make a positive contribution;
- Inform customers of the risks and precautions to be taken in terms of health and safety in the destination;
- Keep a contact person and a telephone number available at all times for emergency situations;
- Train staff and make available guidelines on how to handle emergency situations;
- Provide customers with documented guidelines and/or codes of conduct for excursions and sensitive activities, to minimize negative impact on visitors and maximize enjoyment;
- Encourage customers to use local restaurants and shops;
- Inform customers about sustainable transport options in destinations, when possible;
- Encourage customers to donate to local charities and sustainable initiatives;

After the holidays, we are committed to doing this by:

- Systematically measure customer satisfaction and take the results into account to improve services and products;
- Include sustainability as an integral part of customer satisfaction research;
- Have clear procedures in case of customer complaints;