

## Explore Himalaya Travel & Adventure Sustainable Accommodation Policy

We are a socially responsible travel company. We promote fair practices in all our operations including accommodation in our tours/supply chain. Normally, we don't choose accommodation options for our clients. However, our policy is to help our clients select the most sustainable accommodation options suitable for them. In doing so, we highly recommend the properties that practice sustainability in all their operations.

### Scope

This policy is applicable in the selection of accommodation providers that we recommend to our clients. This policy comes under effect after the approval by Managing Director and circulation to all staffs. The policy will be thoroughly reviewed every 2 years to ensure its relevancy and consistency. In case of any inconsistency, the Managing Director or any authorized officer must initiate for corrective measures.

### 1. Sustainable Accommodation Principles

While selecting the accommodation providers, we choose the establishments that comply with the following principles:

- The right comfort for the right price

The property is hygienic, safe and comfortable. It provides the services that offer the best value for money and meet the expectations of our clients.

- Fair business

The establishment adheres to responsible business practices that include transparency and adherence to law, human rights and economic/social equity, and environmental and animal protection.

- Minimizes impact on the environment and society

The establishment aims at minimizing its effects on the surrounding environment and society in every possible way.

### 2. Sustainability Considerations

Nepal offers a wide range of accommodation facilities from luxurious hotels to basic teahouses owned by local people depending upon the areas. We try to choose the most suitable one that fits within the budget and requirements of our clients. We follow the following steps while assessing the accommodation providers.

#### 2.1 Evaluations of the accommodation

We adopt following measures to evaluate the accommodation providers.

- Property visit by company's Sustainability Coordinator/General Manager
- Observations by our guide and group leader
- Clients' review and testimony

While evaluating the accommodation providers, the following considerations are made.

- **Human care**

We collaborate with establishments that practice equitable management of their human resources. We ensure that they provide lawful working conditions to their staffs (minimum wage, reasonable working times, proper lunch hours, facilities etc.).

- **Plastic policy**

We make sure the accommodations minimize the use of plastic and encourages the use of recyclable materials. For example, they do not offer plastic water bottles to their guests, place water pitchers in rooms so that they can refill their water bottles etc.

- **Waste management**

We confirm that the accommodations at least follow basic waste management norms like separating organic waste for composting and plastic for recycling. The establishments that follow the practices of recycling, reusing and reducing more sincerely will be highly preferred.

- **Energy efficiency**

We verify that the establishment follows energy efficiency practices, such as energy saving light bulbs, and energy efficient equipment. The accommodation providers also advise their guest through signs to switch off lights and electric appliances when not in use or install timer switches.

- **Water efficiency**

We make sure that the accommodation uses water efficiently. The accommodation ensures no leakage in pipes, use of grey water, controlled water supply, proper shower heads, proper laundry loads etc.

- **Child protection**

The establishments should ensure that the rights of children are safeguarded and don't employ staffs under the age of 14. If they employ staffs between 14 and 18, they should ensure that they enjoy the right of special working conditions like part-time or internship. Under that conditions also, the establishment should ensure that they are never put in hazardous working conditions.

- **Local supplies**

Accommodations are encouraged to use locally grown goods and products, produced by individual farmers or community supported organizations. We ensure the local supplies production is based on fair trade principles.

- **Biodiversity care**

We consider the accommodations minimize their impacts on local and global biodiversity wherever possible, for example building site away from fragile terrain, not offering endangered species on the menu etc.

- **Authentic charm**

We prioritize the accommodation that the buildings promote local art and architecture so that the beauty of the vicinity remains intact.

- **Community value**

We prefer the establishments that respect the intellectual and communal property rights of local communities. We make sure that they also advise the clients to follow the same values and also contribute to the local community in whichever way possible like sponsoring the local events, donation to local heritage sites etc.

## **2.2 Stimulating enhanced sustainable practice**

Sustainability includes in our long-term strategic planning. So, we expect our accommodation providers follow sustainable practices on a continuous and regular basis. To support their sustainable commitment, we collaborate with other tour operators and/or stakeholders upon request or as a self-initiation. We give our review and recommendations to the accommodation owners/managers about their current practices. In addition, we also share best practice standards and guidance to them, including:

- Information about hotel certification, such as Travelife for hotels
- Self-evaluation tools
- Training manuals

## **2.3 Sanctions**

In case of failure to act in sustainable ways, we will warn the accommodation providers at first. If it does not amend its practices, our company will terminate any form of collaboration (informal and contractual) and will blacklist that company from any further connection.

## **2.4 Communication to accommodation providers**

We regularly communicate with the accommodation providers in various ways.

- **Email**

Our most common form of communication is via email and phone. Email makes us easy to communicate about both operation activities and sustainable aspects.

- **Voucher**

Once our booking is made, we provide a voucher with all booking details to the accommodation suppliers to claim their payment. We send the voucher via email to avoid

paper waste. And we encourage the suppliers who prefer a paper proof to accept soft copy in future.

- **Contract**

We sign contracts with the accommodation suppliers with whom we work on a regular basis with sufficient volume of clients. The contract includes an overview of our codes of conduct, obligations and terms and conditions, which is signed by both parties upon agreement.

- **In-person visit**

We visit the accommodation regularly in person and discussion how they could improve their services in sustainable way. Most of the time, the properties are visited by managers and guides.

- **Incentives**

It is our policy to promote those accommodation establishments that take responsibility of their impacts on environment and society, and operate in sustainable way. For such suppliers, we may offer additional benefits, such as promotion of the hotel on our website or special contract conditions.

## Sample E-mail text

Dear Accommodation Partner,

We are very happy to share with you the updates of our Travelife Sustainability Program. The program is sure to help us operate our programs in more responsible way and contribute to the development of sustainable tourism in Nepal. In the same concern, we would also like to invite you to involve actively in the long-term progress of sustainable tourism in our country.

We therefore kindly request you to respect and comply with our Sustainability Code of Conduct attached herewith. Please sign and return the attached signature page as acceptance of the terms and conditions.

If you are interested in getting further information about sustainability in the hospitality sector to give you more insights for planning and operations, please let us know. We are always more than happy to help you. Please feel free to contact us for further queries.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of representative] [Title of representative]

Date:

## Sample Contract

### Contractual Agreement

#### between

[Explore Himalaya Travel and Adventure, Amrit Marg, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal] hereinafter referred to as Travel Company

and

[The accommodation, address, contact person]

hereinafter referred to as Accommodation and referred collectively to both as 'the parties'

#### Whereas

[The accommodation] is interested to host guests through booking by the Travel Company and serve these guests with proper hospitality care and under conditions of sustainability; and The Travel Company wishes to offer the accommodation to their clients on a non-exclusive basis and under conditions of sustainability.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this contractual agreement is to establish co-operation between the parties and set forth general terms and conditions as well as sustainability code of conduct.

**General terms and conditions**

The general terms and conditions are agreed as follows:

1. The Parties agree to abide by the administrative details relating to the supplies of vouchers, pricing, payment of moneys and other matters as set out in this Agreement and it is expressly agreed that [the accommodation] may give written notice of any amendments thereof provided always that [the accommodation] shall use its best endeavors to give the Travel Company not less than four weeks prior written notice.

2. [The accommodation] agrees to provide information and support to The Travel Company as they may from time to time reasonably require and in particular:

- To provide some directories during the first quarter of each year.
- To supply transparencies and other advertising and promotional materials.
- To participate in marketing campaigns in support of sales activities within the territory.
- To advise The Travel Company of any change to or closure of guest facilities immediately at the time of planning and of any major renovation or refurbishment. Please also advise modifications of tour itineraries, departure times and locations etc. (This information is then passed on to the Travel Company's overseas clients database who are required by travel law to inform all paying passengers of the above changes to any featured product in their brochures).
- To hold all necessary permits and insurances and hereby indemnifies the Travel Company from any injury, damage or loss sustained, arising as a result of the operations of the accommodation's property/organization.

3. The Travel Company agrees and undertakes:

- To comply with the terms of pricing, payment and issuing of vouchers, included hereto.
- To use its best endeavors to sell [the accommodation].
- To inform clients and keep them informed of all conditions relevant to the booking and the exchange of vouchers.
- To keep [the accommodation] fully informed of all relevant developments concerning the market within the territory.

**Rate positioning and vouchers**

4. [The accommodation] commits to the following pricing offers for the period of this

contractual agreement:

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5. Beyond these standard agreed rates, special (e.g. seasonal) packages/rates may be agreed upon between the parties on an ad-hoc basis and also will be covered under the conditions of this contract.

6. [The accommodation] agrees that at all times rates available over the internet will be at least 15% higher than the net rates provided to The Travel Company.

7. Vouchers will only be provided digitally and will be supplied to the supplier by email.

8. All vouchers cover the cost of bed, breakfast (where indicated), VAT (where applicable) and amenities.

9. It is recommended that The Travel Company should not mark up the selling price of any net rate by more than 25% in local currency equivalent.

10. All payments by the Travel Company will be held in a separate trust account pending a claim by [the accommodation] after the date of stay.

### **Rate consistency and cancellation**

11. Rates issued in this contract remain valid for the duration of the stated rate validity period.

12. Only rate reductions will be accepted once the contract has been submitted, no increases.

13. This contract will follow standard cancellation policy as follows:

- Any cancellation by the Travel Company before 48 hours of arrival shall incur no cancellation fee.
- Cancellations under 48 hours of arrival may incur a maximum of 1 night cancellation fee.
- In case of no show 100% cancellation fees apply.
- Cancellations made at any time as a result of force majeure will not incur any cancellation fees.

14. Reservations shall only be held until 6pm on the day of arrival. If guests intend to arrive later than 6pm, the accommodation supplier must be informed. Failing this, the accommodation supplier reserves the right to re-let the room(s).

In pursuit of sustainable tourism operations, the following agency terms apply between the parties.

### **Sustainability code of conduct**

As part of our long-term collaboration, Explore Himalaya Travel and Adventure and [the Accommodation] agree on jointly pursuing and promoting sustainable business practices with the aim to develop sustainable tourism in Nepal. These terms and conditions are an integral part of our collaboration, and main contract if any.

## **Terms and conditions**

### **1. Social welfare and human rights**

1.1 The Accommodation shall follow fair business practices, including transparency and adherence to national law and regulation.

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1.2 The Accommodation shall respect human rights and economic/social equity by establishing fair labor conditions for its staff and providing equal opportunities.

1.3 The Accommodation shall ensure that all employees are free to enter and terminate their employment without penalty and in accordance with the employment contract.

1.4 The Accommodation shall ensure that its activities do not jeopardize the provision or integrity of basic services to its neighboring communities, such as soil, food, water, energy, health care or public space.

1.5 The Accommodation shall respect and safeguard the rights of children, which in the context of Nepal means:

- No employment of children below 14;
- Special working conditions are put in place to safeguard any employees between 14 and 18 (for example part-time or on internship basis):
- Follow the Child Protection Code against sexual exploitation of children. Any suspicious behavior from persons on the premises or during excursion shall be reported to the local authorities immediately.

### **2. Socio-cultural conditions**

2.1 The Accommodation shall purchase and use local food products, which are produced based on fair trade and sustainability principles.

2.2 The Accommodation shall respect and maintain elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage within its premises.

2.3 The Accommodation shall not sell or promote souvenirs that contain historic or archeological value, except as permitted by law.

### **3. Environment and biodiversity**

3.1 The Accommodationshallminimizetheir impact on the environment by reducing plastic, using energy and water efficiently and ensuring proper waste management.

3.2 The Accommodation shall ensure that animal-related activities, if any, are operated within proper internationally accepted animal welfare conditions.

3.3 The Accommodation shall limit their negative effect on local and global biodiversity wherever feasible (e.g. do not offer red listed species on the menu).



#### **4. Monitoring and Sanctions**

4.1 The Accommodation shall fully co-operate with the sustainability terms and conditions of this contract, and shall allow and support on-site inspections by our company or appointed third party in order to monitor compliance with sustainability conditions.

4.2 In case of clear evidence that the Accommodation jeopardizes the provision or integrity of basic services such as food, water, energy, healthcare or soil of the neighboring communities it can be reason to terminate this contract.

4.3 The company will end this contractual agreement prematurely if the and Accommodation does not take adequate measures to prevent (1) corruption bribery, (2) sexual exploitation of children. This contractual agreement will take effect upon its signatures.

In witness whereof, we sign this agreement in twofold:

[name of signatory]  
[title of signatory]  
[name of company]  
Date:  
Stamp:

[name of signatory]  
[title of signatory]  
[name of supplier]  
Date:  
Stamp: