

Explore Himalaya Travel & Adventure Sustainability Policy

Explore Himalaya Travel and Adventure admits that it must work to preserve the environmental sustainability at all levels of its operations. As our core activities involve exploring the fragile terrain and cultural heritage sites, sustainable practices have always been our guiding principle. We aim to incorporate responsible best practices into our overall business activities to improve the environmental, social and economic aspects of the area in which we operate. While doing so, we also help our clients and expect same commitment from our partners and suppliers.

Our Sustainability Policy is based upon the following principles:

- To integrate sustainability considerations into all our business decisions.
- To ensure that all staffs are fully aware of our Sustainability Policy and are committed to implementing and improving it.
- To minimize the impact of all our office and travel operation activities.
- To make clients and suppliers aware of our sustainability commitments, and encourage them to adopt sound sustainable practices.
- To ensure accountability and transparency in our sustainability performance.

Core Values

- Our company respects and promotes human rights, and we work mutually with staffs, clients, suppliers and partners with respect and cooperation.
- Our company follows national labour standards at all level of our operations. We have Human Resource Policy that describes our internal employment standards in detail.
- Our company is committed to creative approaches to minimize negative environmental impacts.
- Our company practices high standards of honesty and integrity consistently across our operations.
- Our company operates according to our corporate values and are committed to preventing corruption in all its forms and do not bear it in our business or with business partners.

2. Sustainability in the Company Structure

Our company considers sustainability as an integral part of its structure.

2.1 Sustainability Coordination

Our company has appointed a Sustainability Coordinator, who supervises the implementation of sustainability policy, acts as a mediator between colleagues and management about the implementation of the policy, collects recommendations and formulates plans and policies for future.

Task description

- Coordinate Travelife reporting and certification
- Formulate company's sustainable strategies
- Disseminate company's sustainability policy among all staffs
- Implement sustainability policy and monitor its implementation
- Measure and analyse the company's sustainability performance
- Support internal and external communication regarding company's Sustainability Policy and actions.
- Report regularly (at least twice a year) on sustainability progress and challenges within the company to the management;

2.2 Access to the Policy

The company's sustainability policy is easily accessible to all our stakeholders.

- Sustainability is always our main concern in our office meetings.
- We have an organized and well-defined communication system for circulating the policy within the company and for requesting our suppliers to follow our sustainability standards.
- An overview of our sustainability principles and initiatives are communicated on our website.

2.3 Action Planning

The company has formulated sustainability action plans with specific targets, tasks, measures, resources and timeline. They are developed on an annual basis regularly, with a collective effort of all staff members. All the staffs responsibly take part in the implementation of planned actions to achieve the targeted goals. The company considers their involvement as motivating factor for the successful implementation of sustainability policy and future planning.

2.4 Monitoring

Our company holds a regular meeting once a month with all office staffs. Reviewing the implementation of sustainability policy is our regular agenda. Staffs present report and review the progress of the action plan and discuss about areas for improvements.

Our company also holds a general meeting twice a year with our guides and field staffs to review our performance during the trips.

3. Sustainable Office Operations

Our company is committed to sustainable practices across all office operations.

3.1 Energy

- Our office has installed solar plant, which helps in providing majority of our electricity.
- Our office follows strict "switch off" policy and all staffs are responsible for switching off any lights and equipment that are not in use.
- We use energy saving light bulbs (CFL / LED) across the whole office and only switch on lights when really necessary.
- Our office maximizes the use of energy efficient devices like laptops instead of desktops.

3.2 Water

Tap water

- Our office is connected to government Water Supply Corporation.
- Taps are regularly checked for leakage and immediately repaired when required. “Turn off” signs are used at all taps to remind people for turning off the tap after use.

Drinking water

- The office supplies drinking water in 20L bottles for office staffs and clients.
- The 20L bottles are placed at each department, along with water bottles and cups.
- We calculate the number of water bottles we consume every month.
- There is one water dispenser that provides hot water.
- Sawyer water filters are used during the treks to provide drinking water to our clients.

Waste water

- Our waste water is connected to government drain system. The treatment of waste water is looked after by the government.
- We re-use the waste water from washing dishes or cleaning office for flushing the toilet.
- Our toilet water goes into the government drain system.

3.3 Paper

- Our company only uses ISO certified paper available in Nepal.
- Paper is always used on both sides; either by printing on two sides or by using one side as scrap paper.
- Our company promotes the use of emails and e-copies for saving paper.
- Our Company works together with DOKO Recyclers for waste management of papers and plastic.

3.4 Waste

- Our company minimizes waste in all possible ways.
- Biodegradable waste is separated and sold to <https://www.dokorecyclers.com/>

3.5 Transportation

- We make sure new models of Vehicles are used for low emission.
- Both office and field staff prefer coming to office by bicycle, by public transportation or on foot.
- We minimize official travel for office staff. When travelling abroad, flights are offset where possible.

3.6 Food

- Our company prioritizes locally available and organically grown food.
- MSG or any other taste enhancer added food is strictly prohibited.
- Catering service is chosen on the basis of nutritious and hygienically prepared food.
- When using catering, our company provides re-usable boxes for food transport to avoid use of plastic, aluminium and paper wrapping.

- We minimize the food wastage in all possible ways.

3.7 Health & Safety

- First aid kit is available in the office. It is kept in an easily accessible place.
- First aid kits are sent on every Treks and Tours.
- Fire extinguisher is available in the office. It is kept in an easily accessible place.

3.8 Tea & Coffee

- Our office uses Nepalese tea and coffee, which is easily available.
- Our office prefers organic and/or fair trade tea and coffee wherever/whenever possible.

3.9 Cleaning

- Our office is cleaned with water only wherever possible.
- Detergents are used in limited amount in case of necessity to ensure the hygiene and sanitation of the area.
- We minimize the use of harmful substances, including pesticides, paints, and cleaning materials, and substitute by harmless products wherever possible.
- Extra precaution is taken in the storage, handling and disposal of chemicals (if any).

3.10 Office environment

- Trees have been planted in our office complex.
- Our office premise is decorated with plants.
- Sustainability signs are placed in our office to remind our staff about our policies.
- We minimize noise, light, air, water and soil pollution in all possible ways.

4. Sustainability and Public Relations

Our company aims at sharing its sustainable practices and achievements to its partners, suppliers, clients and general public.

4.1 Sustainability questions

The company prepares for any sustainability related questions from its partners, suppliers, clients and general public.

- The contact details of our Sustainability Coordinator are provided when required by Clients, Suppliers.
- We include questions on sustainability in our Client Feedback Form.
- All staffs are well trained to respond to questions related to sustainability practices or refer them to the Sustainability Coordinator.

4.2 Travel Trade Shows

- Print materials for travel trade shows are kept to a minimum. Longer contents are sent via emails. Brochures and Tariff books are kept in CD's and Flashdrives.
- In case of left over materials, they are always taken back to our office for future use.

4.3 Ethical Code of Conduct

- Bribery - Not offer, promise or give, not request, agree to or accept undue pecuniary or other advantage to/from public officials or the employees of business partners.
- Fair competition - Refrain from entering into or carrying out anti-competitive agreements among competitors, including agreements to: a) fix prices; b) make rigged bids (collusive tenders); c) establish output restrictions or quotas; or d) share or divide markets by allocating customers, suppliers, territories or lines of commerce.
- Consumer protection - Respect consumer privacy and take reasonable measures to ensure the security of personal data they collect, store, process or disseminate.

5. Areas of Sustainable Practice

Our company has developed specific policy guidelines for the following five main areas where we integrate sustainable practices. These policies fall under the scope of this general Sustainability Policy and are available as separate documents.

- Sustainable Accommodation Policy
- Sustainable Procurement Policy
- Sustainable Transportation Policy
- Sustainable Excursion Policy
- Sustainable HR policy