



SUSTAINABLE POLICY

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1. Introduction

At Arya Village Travel, we consider sustainability to be a fundamental value that guides our organization. We believe that tourism can have a positive impact on the local economy and environment when it is managed effectively. Therefore, we are continuously exploring innovative ways to incorporate sustainability into our products and business practices. This approach not only enhances the visitor experience but also benefits both people and the planet.

Our sustainability policy is centered on two main aspects, namely People and Planet.

- In terms of People, we prioritize ensuring that the advantages of tourism benefit the local communities. To achieve this, we support and empower our clients, suppliers, employees, and the local communities to adopt responsible travel principles to promote positive relationships between travelers and host communities.
- In terms of Planet, we are committed to carbon reduction and mitigation, animal welfare, wildlife protection, habitat and landscape preservation, reduction of plastic, waste, and energy. Our love for the environment goes beyond just exploring it, and we collaborate with our partners and stakeholders to make travel more environmentally sensitive.

Additionally, we are committed to following our sustainability policy in every aspect of our business operations. This includes regular monitoring and evaluation of our sustainability practices to ensure that we are constantly improving and making a positive impact on both people and the planet. We believe that sustainable tourism is essential for the long-term success of our organization, the well-being of the local communities, and the preservation of the environment.

2. Sustainable Management and Legal Compliance:

Arya Village Travel is dedicated to sustainable management practices, and to achieve this objective, we commit to the following actions:

- Appointing a designated employee to serve as a sustainability coordinator.
- Developing a sustainability mission statement that is available on our website and communicated to our customers, partners, and suppliers.
- Creating a written sustainability policy that aims to reduce the negative social, cultural, economic, and environmental impacts associated with our company's activities. This policy includes health and safety aspects related to our employees that are publicly accessible.
- Establishing a sustainability action plan that outlines clear targets, actions, measures, responsibilities, and timeframes.
- Publishing our sustainability report at least every two years.
- Ensuring that our customers, partners, and suppliers adhere to and protect the rights of children by:
 - Forbidding and preventing sexual exploitation of children.
 - Including a clause in contracts throughout the value chain that upholds a shared rejection and zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual exploitation of children.

Furthermore, we pledge to comply with all national legislation, regulations, and codes of practice.

3. Internal Management: Social Policy and Human rights:

Arya Village Travel is committed to sustainable internal management by implementing a clear, written, and effectively communicated social policy that comprises the following principles:

- Granting employees the freedom to terminate their employment contract with prior notice (ideally of at least one month) and without penalty.
- Specifying the wage rate in the contract, which must be equal to or above the national legal wage.

- Determining and compensating for overtime working hours based on agreement.
- Providing medical and liability insurance in accordance with Nepal's legal requirements.
- Offering fixed paid yearly holiday and sick leave with an allowance for unpaid annual leave.
- Having a health and safety policy for employees that adheres to national legal standards.
- Ensuring the availability of first aid kits and trained staff at all relevant locations.
- Complying with national laws regarding the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment.
- Establishing effective documented procedures for employees to express their complaints and expectations.
- Providing periodic guidance and training for employees on their roles, rights, and responsibilities related to health and safety issues, including those related to fire and relevant natural disasters.

We also pledge to practice human rights by upholding the following practices:

- Declaring that we do not impede trade union membership, collective labor negotiations, and representation of members by trade unions.
- Participating in and complying with a (sector-wide) collective labor condition negotiation structure (if it exists locally).
- Prohibiting discrimination during recruitment, conditions of employment, access to training and senior positions, or promotion based on gender, race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion/beliefs, or sexual orientation.

4. Internal Management: Environment and Community Relations:

We are committed to practicing environmental protection and strengthening community relations by implementing the following practices:

4.1 Sustainable procurement policy:

Aarya Village Travel is devoted to positive social and environmental impact with an aim for sustainability in all aspects of our operations, including sourcing and procurement department. The objective of this policy is to consider environment, social, and economic factors along with price, product quality, and delivery of goods which not only achieves value for money but also benefits environment and economy of society.

- Comply with International & National laws, rules, guidelines, regulations, and standards. This includes CITES Treaty and the IUCN Red list.
- Establish sustainable procurement objectives, targets, and key performance indicators.
- Communicate policy to suppliers and employees at all levels to raise awareness.
- Prefer eco-friendly certified products that conserve energy and reduce air, water and land pollution over conventional products. The company has strict policy against plastic usage in any form that includes less packaging materials, polythene bags, PET bottles etc.
- Support the procurement of local products from Nepalese vendors to boost economic growth, job creation, and income generation for local people.
- Give preference to handmade, organic, fair trade, locally produced and/or from social enterprises for the giveaways and souvenirs.
- Monitor the purchasing pattern to make a bulk purchase. Avoid purchasing unnecessary items.
- Whenever possible replace toxic chemicals with safer alternatives.
- Purchase materials made of recycled material or materials that can be reused or recycled.
- Abide the principle of reduce – reuse and recycle during procurement.

4.2 Energy reduction policy:

We take number of actions to ensure a right amount of energy is utilized in office operation. The objective of this policy is to stimulate energy efficiency programs to promote energy reduction actions. The actions specified in this

policy shall be implemented in a proactive and progressive approach to ensure energy efficient, responsible, and cost effective operations. By reducing our energy consumption, we aim to contribute to a more sustainable future and minimize our carbon footprint. Wherever feasible, all employees including directors, management and employees should adhere to following policy:

- Comply with International & National laws, rules, guidelines, regulations, and standards.
- Communicate policy to suppliers and employees at all levels to raise awareness.
- Establish energy reduction objectives, targets, and key performance indicators.
- Monitor and evaluate energy reduction levels through implementation of monitoring system.
- Provide training to staffs on environmental commitments.
- Reduce operating costs through energy efficiency.
- Be responsible for energy reduction in individual workplace. This includes switching off computers, laptops, office equipment's, personal appliances when not in use.
- Ensure all the electric equipment is unplugged after office hours and sockets are switched off.
- Continue usage of energy efficient LED lights.
- Shift to sustainable web-browser (Eco-Asia).
- Provide prior information to educate travelers on energy-saving practices, and encourage them to adopt sustainable habits while on tour.

4.3 Water reduction policy:

A water reduction policy is an essential aspect of a Aarya Village Travel's sustainability efforts. We take number of actions to ensure a right amount of water is utilized in office operation. The goal of this policy is to reduce water use, thereby limiting consumption of resource under considerable pressure. The policy outlines the steps the agency will take to reduce its water use, including conducting a water audit, setting water reduction targets, implementing water efficiency measures, encouraging employees and customers to adopt sustainable habits, and collaborating with suppliers to promote water reduction. The actions specified in this policy shall be implemented in a proactive and progressive approach to ensure necessary water is consumed for responsible and cost effective operations. Wherever feasible, all employees including directors, management and employees responsible should adhere to following policy:

- Comply with International & National laws, rules, guidelines, regulations, and standards.
- Communicate policy to suppliers and employees at all levels to raise awareness.
- Establish water reduction objectives, targets, and key performance indicators.
- Monitor and evaluate water reduction levels through implementation of monitoring system.
- Educate employees on water-saving practices, and encourage them to adopt sustainable habits both in the workplace and in their personal lives.
- Identify significant and abnormal water use including leaks.
- Minimize the use of water through best practice maintenance & cleaning routines.
- Provide prior information to clients regarding scarcity of water in rural areas of Nepal. Advise clients of minimizing water usage during their stay in Nepal.

4.4 Waste reduction policy:

A waste reduction policy is an important component of an Aarya Village Travel's sustainability strategy. The goal of this policy is to minimize waste generation, promote recycling and composting, and encourage environmentally friendly practices. This policy outlines the steps that the agency will take to reduce waste and promote sustainability, including conducting waste audits, setting waste reduction targets, using environmentally friendly products, encouraging employees and travelers to adopt sustainable habits, and collaborating with suppliers to promote waste reduction. By implementing a waste reduction policy, we aim to contribute to a more sustainable future and reduce

our environmental impact. Wherever feasible, all employees including directors, management and employees responsible should adhere to following policy:

- Conduct a waste audit: Evaluate the amount and types of waste generated by the agency, and identify areas where waste reduction can be achieved.
- Set waste reduction targets: Based on the results of the waste audit, set specific, measurable, and achievable waste reduction targets.
- Implement waste reduction programs: Include recycling programs on composting, reducing single-use plastics, and encourage clients to reduce waste.
- Use environmentally friendly products: Prefer environmentally friendly products, such as reusable water bottles, biodegradable soap, and environmentally friendly cleaning products.
- Encourage employees to adopt waste reduction practices: Educate employees on waste reduction practices and encourage them to adopt sustainable habits both in the workplace and in their personal lives.
- Foster partnerships with suppliers to promote waste reduction: Collaborate with suppliers to promote waste reduction, and encourage them to adopt sustainable practices.
- Promote waste reduction to customers: Prepare prior travel information to educate customers on waste reduction practices, and encourage them to adopt sustainable habits while on tour.

5. Transportation Policy:

Wherever feasible, all employees including directors, management and employees should adhere to following policy:

5.1 Sustainability criteria to select transportation:

When making the decision on which form of sustainable transportation to use at a certain location, the following criteria has to be taken into account:

- Carbon Footprint: The transport system chosen should emit minimal carbon emissions, or utilize renewable energy sources.
- Distance: The distance to be covered and the time it takes to reach the destination should be considered to ensure that the transportation method is practical and efficient.
- Comfort and Ease of Use: The passengers must be comfortable and the transport system should cater to their needs.
- Affordability: The cost of the transport system must be reasonable and within reach of the clients.
- Safety: The safety of the passengers must be ensured, and the mode of transportation needs to be in compliance with safety regulations.
- Occupancy: Select a vehicle that is suitable for the number of people in the group
- For the Long hauls destinations prioritize longer stays at the destinations, particularly for long-distance trips.

5.2 Provide sustainable transportation alternatives: In selecting transportation options for transfers and excursions in the destination, prioritize more sustainable alternatives such as walking, biking, public transit, and electric vehicles while taking into consideration of practicality and cost-effectiveness. These options will be consulted with clients prior to their travel in Nepal to ensure that their preferences and needs are taken into account while promoting sustainable transportation.

5.3 Transport vehicle inspection guidelines: It is compulsory that the vehicle is inspected twice a year to make sure it is secure, dependable, and eco-friendly. These evaluations are fundamental for sustaining the reliability of the transport system and lessening any probable threats to both travelers and the environment. The policy further emphasizes on the regular upkeep and maintenance of the transportation system to ensure that it is functioning at its best all year round. The transport vehicle safety checklist shall be as follows:

- Tires: Check tire pressure, tread depth, and overall condition of all tires, including the spare tire.

- Brakes: Check the brake pads, rotors, and fluid levels to ensure the brakes are in good working condition.
- Lights: Test all lights, including headlights, taillights, turn signals, and emergency flashers, to ensure they are working properly.
- Windshield wipers: Check the condition of the blades and ensure they are functioning correctly.
- Engine: Check fluid levels, including oil, coolant, and transmission fluid, and inspect belts, hoses, and air filters for any signs of wear or damage.
- Steering and suspension: Check the steering and suspension systems for any signs of wear or damage and ensure the vehicle handles and drives properly.
- Seat belts: Check that all seat belts are in good working condition and functioning properly.
- Emergency equipment: Ensure that the vehicle is equipped with a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, and other necessary emergency equipment.
- Cleanliness: Ensure that the vehicle is clean and free of any debris that could obstruct the driver's view or cause distractions.

6. Accommodation policy:

As a responsible tour agency, we are committed to promoting sustainable accommodations for our clients. Wherever feasible, all employees including directors, management and employees should adhere to following policy:

6.1 Criteria for selecting hotels:

- Seek out establishments who have a goal of reducing its impact on the environment and society in the surrounding area. During the selection process, hotels with following criteria are to be prioritized:
- Energy-saving strategies like renewable energy sources, LED lighting, rain water harvesting, and efficient heating and cooling systems.
- Waste reducing practices like recycling, composting, and cutting down on single-use plastics.
- Responsible in water usage measures such as conservation techniques, rainwater harvesting, and water-efficient fixtures.
- Accommodations that is accessible through public transport or within walking or biking distance to reduce private transportation needs.
- Certified by environmental organizations such as Travel Life, GSTC, or EarthCheck.
- Accommodation that evaluates and reports its own sustainability practices through self-assessment.
- Boutique hotels that integrate traditional architectural style of buildings while respecting intellectual property of local artisans.
- Strives to assist the local community, by sponsoring local events, local procurement and providing donations for the preservation of local heritage or natural sites.
- Guarantees the legal rights of children with a zero tolerance policy of sexual exploitation of children
- Minimizes use of plastic products in operation of business.

6.2 Communication to clients: Encourage and provide guidance to clients on selecting accommodations that adheres to criteria mentioned above.

6.3 Communication to accommodation providers: There are multiple ways we communicate sustainability issues with accommodation establishments:

- The most common methods include email and phone, with a particular focus on sustainability aspects when sending emails. For regular suppliers with sufficient volume, sign contracts that include our codes of conduct and sanctions.
- During communication with accommodation providers inspire and urge them to obtain sustainable certification for their accommodations.

6.4 Accommodation indicators, implementations and monitor:

This section includes indicators on sustainable accommodation to measure its environmental, social, and economic impact. Further, an outline of implementations strategy and effective monitoring system is designed to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure the policy's success.

Sustainable accommodation indicators: Comply with Travel life's Green sustainable hotel criteria

Implementation strategy:

Monitor:

- Develop a questionnaire regarding sustainability hotel indicators and disseminate amongst accommodation suppliers once.
- Visit accommodations in person whenever possible to discuss how they can improve their services and become more sustainable.

7. Excursion policy:

At Aarya Village Travel, we prioritize the welfare of nature, animals, and local communities. The objective of this policy is to organize tours with minimal impact on the environment, preserving the authenticity of communities and their natural surroundings. Hence, wherever feasible, all employees including directors, management and employees responsible for procurement should adhere to following policy:

- Prepare, review, and communicate a sustainable code of conduct to clients with a focus on respecting the local culture, nature, and environment during their trip in Nepal.
- Encourage and provide guidance to clients about tours and activities that directly contribute to and benefit local communities. These may include sustainable accommodation, purchasing services or goods, traditional crafts, locally produced food, or visiting social projects.
- List types of activities and excursions that is sensitive to environmental and cultural impacts.
- Do not provide activities that could potentially cause harm to people, animals, plants, or natural resources, such as air, water and land, or those that are socially and culturally inappropriate.
- Offering tours or activities that involve keeping wild animals confined is prohibited, except for those that are appropriately regulated and comply with local, national, and international laws.
- Avoid any association with businesses that engage in the harvesting, consumption, display, sale, or trade of wildlife species.
- Assign certified guides who have received appropriate training for leading tours in culturally sensitive sites, heritage sites, or ecologically sensitive areas.

8. Tour leaders, local representatives and guides:

At Aarya Village Travel, we prioritize involving locals in the tourism industry and promoting a fair and safe working environment that respects local communities. To ensure this, we pledge to:

- Give preference to local tour leaders, representatives, guides, porters, drivers, cooks, and other staff in case of equal ability, and provide necessary training.
- Ensure that our employed tour leaders, representatives, guides, and other locally active staff understand the terms and conditions of their employment, including remuneration.
- Pay our contracted local staff, including tour leaders, representatives, guides, and porters, at least a living wage that is equal to or above the legal minimum or relevant industry standard.
- Ensure that our tour guides, hosts, and other employees under contract are qualified and receive regular training.
- Educate our local guides on relevant sustainability matters, social norms and values, and human rights to ensure compliance with our sustainability policy.

- Ensure that our trekking staff has appropriate clothing and equipment for excursions and adheres to national standards for trekking weight.
- Have our tour leaders, local representatives, and guides inform clients about relevant sustainability matters in the destination, social norms and values, and human rights.
- Train our employed tour leaders and local representatives to avoid sexual exploitation of children.

9. Destination:

At Arya Village Travel, we strive to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts at our destinations to ensure sustainable development. To achieve this, we commit to:

- Consider sustainability aspects in the selection process of new destinations and offer alternative, non-mainstream destinations where necessary.
- Avoid selecting destinations in which tourism leads to negative structural, local effects unless our involvement results in clear counterbalancing effects.
- Comply with legally based spatial planning, protected areas, heritage regulations, and destination management strategies of local, regional, and national authorities.
- Not promote souvenirs containing threatened flora and fauna species or historic and archaeological artifacts as indicated in the CITES treaty and the IUCN “Red List”.

10. Customer communication and protection:

At Arya Village Travel, we prioritize customer communication and protection. Prior to booking, we pledge to:

- Uphold the privacy of our customers
- Adhere to relevant marketing and advertising standards and codes of conduct, without making unrealistic promises
- Provide clear, complete, and accurate information on our company, products, and services, including sustainability claims
- Furnish customers with factual and comprehensive destination information, which includes sustainability aspects
- Inform customers clearly of our sustainability commitments and actions.

Once bookings have been made and throughout the holidays, we ensure the following:

- Provide information to our customers on the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage of the holiday destination
- Inform customers about significant sustainability aspects and issues in the destination, and provide recommendations on how to make a positive contribution
- Advise customers about potential risks and necessary precautions regarding health and safety in the destination
- Ensure that a contact person and telephone number are always available in case of emergency situations
- Train personnel on emergency procedures and maintain guidelines on how to deal with such situations
- Furnish clients with documented guidelines and/or codes of conduct for sensitive excursions and activities, in order to minimize negative visitor impact and maximize enjoyment. We develop these guidelines in conjunction with relevant NGOs and affected communities when possible.
- Inform clients about applicable legislation related to the purchasing, sales, import, and export of historic or religious artefacts and articles containing materials of threatened flora and/or fauna.
- Encourage clients to utilize local restaurants and shops where possible
- Provide information on sustainable transport options in destinations when feasible
- Urge clients to donate to local charities and sustainable initiatives

After the holidays, we commit to the following:

- Systematically measure client satisfaction and take into account the results for service and product improvements
- Maintain clear procedures for handling client complaints.