



# Sustainability Policy

Last Reviewed: May 2022

## **Purpose and Scope**

This policy is intended to be a reference point for all stakeholders in 50 Degrees North. This extends to our staff, suppliers and clients. A shorter overview of our Sustainability principles can be found on our website, but this document is intended to give an in-depth overview of the wide range of topics that fall under the Sustainability banner.

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Sustainability Manager and Leadership Team.

## **Introduction**

Sustainable tourism and responsible travel are at the forefront of the 50 Degrees North philosophy. We aim to create and maintain sustainable business practices that not only provide economic benefits for the local populations in our destinations, but also respect and protect nature, cultural heritage, and local values, with the aim of preserving all of these for future generations.

## **Our Key Principles for Sustainable Tourism and Responsible Travel**

- Spreading wealth by promoting less visited destinations and local places, as well as promoting travel in low season (i.e. as an antidote to overtourism)
- Supporting local people and their businesses to ensure socio-economic benefit and sustainability for local communities (i.e. rather than multinational corporations)
- Preferring partnerships with operators who adhere to strict environmental, quality and safety standards set by recognised national certification schemes (where available).
- Promoting low emission transport options, e.g. the use of trains and other public transport, electric vehicles, electric snow mobiles and ships with a strong emission reduction strategy
- Respecting the limitations of the destinations by minimising our impact on local nature, wildlife and culture
- Actively contributing to the preservation of local nature, wildlife, cultures and landscapes

# Responsible Travel in the Destination

## Accommodation

The accommodations we use are a vital element of our tours, as such it is of key importance that in order to provide as sustainable a tour as possible, we place priority on working with accommodations that are invested in sustainable practices.

### We commit to this by:

- Preferring partnerships with operators who adhere to strict environmental, quality and safety standards set by recognised national certification schemes (where available).
- Preferring accommodations that have a Sustainability Policy.
- Preferring accommodations that have a good sustainability practice in place, audited through site visits and additional external sources. This includes, but is not limited to;
  - The use of renewable energy
  - Water and energy saving initiatives
  - A system in place for waste management, inc plastic reduction
  - Employing local staff and contributing to the economy of local communities, such as through sourcing of local produce
- Supporting accommodations that are locally owned and staffed, to ensure socio-economic benefit and sustainability for local communities.
- The company prefers accommodations and restaurants that incorporate elements of local art, architecture or cultural heritage; while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities (taking into account price, comfort and other selection criteria).

## Transport

We recognise that transportation is one of the main contributing factors towards climate change, and often emits the greatest volume of carbon on our experiences. We therefore do our best to provide the most sustainable transport option available.

**We commit to this by:**

- Using suppliers that offer the most sustainable transport options and emit fewer emissions (taking into consideration comfort, practicality and price)
- We will inform our customers if the arrival/departure transfers are possible by public transport (taking into consideration comfort, practicality and price)
- We encourage our customers to offset their flights through verified carbon offset providers
- Setting clear goals and objectives for lowering our carbon emissions emitted from transport

**Excursions and Activities**

We care passionately about providing our clients experiences that not only support local businesses, but respect the limitations of the destinations by minimising our impact on local nature, wildlife and culture

**We commit to this by:**

- Where possible we prefer partnerships with locally certified excursion providers, or those which adhere to sustainable guidelines.
- Ensuring that our guides are certified or skilled, especially in sensitive areas such as cultural or heritage sites and those of which are ecologically vulnerable.
- Promoting and advising our clients on excursions and activities that support local environments, habitats and landscapes (e.g. visiting protected areas)
- Preferring partnerships with excursion providers which directly involve and support local communities (by purchasing services or goods, traditional crafts and local food production methods, or by visiting social projects).
- Preferring partnerships which support the cultural heritage of the regions they operate in, and do not adversely affect indigenous communities.
- Only offering excursions visiting captive wildlife which have regulated activities in compliance with local, national, and international law;
- Wildlife species are not harvested, consumed, displayed, sold, or traded, except as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilisation is sustainable and in compliance with local, national and international law.

- The company offers no activities that harm humans, animals, plants, natural resources (e.g. water/energy), or which are socially/culturally unacceptable.
- Developing a long-term strategy, in line with the goals of the Glasgow Declaration, to reduce the overall carbon footprint of our excursions and activities.
- Communicating our policies and sustainability objectives to excursion providers and ensuring that our Supplier Code of Conduct is made readily available.

## **Tour Guides and Local Representatives**

As part of our key philosophy, we aim to provide economic benefit to as many local people as possible by engaging them in the tourism industry, and by supporting the communities we visit.

### **We commit to this by:**

- We prefer to work with local tour leaders, guides and representatives to ensure that local knowledge and wealth distribution remains in-destination
- We ensure that local partners comply with all applicable international, national, and local laws and regulations.
- Our local guides are informed on all aspects of our Sustainability Policy through our Code of Conduct and additional communication channels such as newsletters.
- We ensure our guides educate visitors on the need to be respectful of our precious natural, cultural and heritage environments, minimising our footprint and impacts at all times.
- We ensure our guides are respectful of local cultures and cultural heritage, and encourage our customers to do the same.

## **Destinations**

We aim to maximize the positive impacts of our tours and services on the destinations we visit and operate in and minimize any negative effects.

**We commit to this by:**

- Respecting the limitations of the destinations by minimising our impact on local nature, wildlife and culture
- Supporting local people and their businesses to ensure socio-economic benefit and sustainability for local communities (i.e. rather than multinational corporations)
- Sustainability aspects in destinations are considered in the selection process of new destinations (e.g. accessibility by public transportation, proper waste management infrastructure, community participation).
- We aim to spread wealth by promoting less visited destinations and local places, as well as promoting travel in low season (i.e. as an antidote to over-tourism)
- We aim to support the conservation and biodiversity of the regions we operate in through careful trip planning and having clear policies in place to ensure their protection.
- The company and its direct service providers do not promote souvenirs which contain threatened flora and fauna species as indicated in the CITES treaty and the IUCN 'Red List'; historic and archaeological artefacts (except as permitted by law).

**Partner Agencies**

The majority of our tours are designed and provided in-house, however a small number of tours and experiences are provided through partner agencies. On such occasions we ensure that any tours which are provided through us meet our own standards in regards to sustainable business practice.

**We commit to this by:**

- We document the sustainability practices of our partner agencies
- We select Partner Agencies who benefit local communities and support small businesses
- In the selection of new partner agencies we consider their environmental and social policies, where applicable

## **Carbon Reduction**

We are founding signatories of the Glasgow Declaration and as such we commit to deliver plans aligned with the pathways to cut tourism emissions in half over the next decade and reach Net Zero emissions as soon as possible before 2050.

### **Through the Glasgow Declaration 50 Degrees North AS commits to:**

- Support the global commitment to halve emissions by 2030 and reach Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050;
- Deliver climate action plans within 12 months from becoming a signatory (or updating existing plans), and begin implementing them;
- Align plans with the five pathways of the Declaration (Measure, Decarbonise, Regenerate, Collaborate, Finance) to accelerate and co-ordinate climate action in tourism;
- Report publicly on an annual basis on progress against interim and long-term targets, as well as on actions being taken;
- Work in a collaborative spirit, sharing good practices and solutions, and disseminating information to encourage additional organisations to become signatories and supporting one another to reach targets as quickly as possible.

## **Our Clients**

We recognize that sustainability and responsible tourism is of high importance to our clients. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring that our communication on such matters is clear and transparent. The welfare and protection of our clients is also of paramount importance to us and as such we have detailed policies that outline our ongoing obligations to our clients in respect of how we manage personal information.

### **Prior to booking, we commit to this by:**

- Comply with relevant standards and voluntary codes of conduct in marketing and advertising messages, and not promise more than is delivered.
- Ensure that customer privacy is not compromised  
[www.fiftydegreesnorth.com/uk/privacy-and-legal](http://www.fiftydegreesnorth.com/uk/privacy-and-legal)

- Ensuring product and price information is clear, complete and accurate, with regards to the company and its products and services, including sustainability claims;
- Provide destination information, including sustainability aspects, which is factually correct, balanced and complete;
- Advise clients on how to research sustainable transport options to reach their initial destination.
- Advise clients on sustainable transport options in-destination.
- Inform clients on issues relating to sustainability in our marketing communications

**After booking and during holidays, we commit to this by:**

- Providing information to consumers about the natural surroundings, local culture and cultural heritage in the holiday destination;
- Customers are informed about key sustainability aspects and issues in the destination and receive recommendations on how to make a positive contribution
- Encouraging clients to use locally owned shops and restaurants, where appropriate
- We encourage the use of refillable bottles as an alternative to plastic bottles
- Clients are informed on sustainable transport in their destination, where applicable
- Customers are informed regarding risks and precautions related to health and safety matters in the destination.

**After the tour, we commit to this by:**

- Customer satisfaction is monitored and corrective actions are taken for service and product improvements.
- Have clear procedures in case of complaints from clients.



## **Our Offices**

To improve our environmental sustainability and take action to reduce the carbon footprint of our activities, 50 Degrees North applies the following to all work activities in both our traditional offices and virtual offices:

### **We encourage our staff to:**

#### **Paper**

- Use online video meeting software and online collaboration tools
- Maintain a paperless office as much as possible, except for legal obligations
- If paper use is necessary, reduce the amount of paper used and use recycled providers that use environmentally friendly and sustainable materials (such as FSC)

#### **Energy**

- Reduce energy use by; setting all equipment to the default energy-saving mode and turn off all office electrical items, lighting and heat when not in use; use natural lighting and cooling and reduce heating and air conditioning; using long life efficient bulbs or LED lamps in our offices
- Prefer energy providers that produce energy from renewable sources if available locally

#### **Waste**

- Reduce the total amount of waste each month
- Avoid the use of plastic and prefer materials made of environmentally friendly resources
- Repair or upgrade electronics instead of buying new ones
- Collect and dispose of waste separately: paper, recycling, organic waste, hazardous waste and ensure recycling bins are positioned throughout the office and accessible with clear instructions on proper recycling. Any suitable food scraps are saved and fed to our CEO's chickens.
- Prefer keep-cups for take away coffee. 50 Degrees North has a single use coffee cup ban in all office locations.

## **Water**

- Reduce water consumption and carry their own refillable water bottle
- Collect leftover water and reuse for watering plants
- Install low flow faucets, and other water saving devices, where possible

## **Food and Drinks**

- Use sustainable catering services from local organisations that use local, organic ingredients where possible.
- Purchase tea/coffee from suppliers which have suitable sustainability certificates in place, such as Fairtrade or organic.

## **Staff Travel**

- We offset all staff travel through a recognized carbon offsetting scheme
- Use online meeting software and online collaboration tools as much as possible, reducing the need to travel to the minimum
- Encourage staff to avoid or reduce using private car in short local trips. Prefer walking or cycling or public transport

## **Marketing Activity:**

- As a paperless company marketing materials are, where possible, digital
- If printed marketing materials are required, then we prefer printed products made entirely from 100% recycled paper sustainable materials (such as FSC)
- Materials associated with Trade Shows and Expos are sourced from sustainable sources where possible.

## **Our Employees**

Our staff happiness and safety is paramount in all we do and we are committed to ensuring that we create a fair and safe workplace for all employees.

### **We commit to this by:**

- We grant employees the freedom of employment and contract termination with notice and without penalty, in accordance with their contract.
- We declare that Trade union membership, collective labour negotiations and representation of members by trade unions is not hindered.

- We have health and safety policy for employees which complies to national legal standards. We include access to first aid sets and an appointed health and safety employee at all relevant locations.
- We measure employee satisfaction on a regular basis, through anonymous feedback surveys, and suggestions are taken into account.
- We regularly create opportunities for students through apprenticeships and internships.

## **Sustainability Management and Legal Compliance**

We are committed to continually improving our sustainability and it's management, and do so with detailed policies in place that are continually assessed.

### **We commit to this by:**

- Having an appointed in-house Sustainability Manager
- Have a sustainability mission statement that is communicated to all stakeholders
- To have a clear written and accessible sustainability policy with the objective of reducing the negative impact of the environmental, economic social and cultural impact of 50 Degrees North activities, and contain employee related health and safety aspects.
- Having a sustainability action plan with set targets, actions, measures, responsibilities and time planning
- Working with Travelife guidelines to continually improve our approach and to ensure our practices are accredited.
- Ensure our policies are communicated to all staff and that there are opportunities for feedback and open discussion on such topics.
- Ensure that all staff receive regular training in regards to sustainability tourism issues related to their roles
- Where possible, take part in external working groups and forums which promote sustainable travel
- We commit to complying with all national legislation, regulations and codes of practice