

Responsible Travel Policy

1. Background

This policy has been constructed from various consultations with shareholders, staff, partners and industry experts. It is the formal articulation of the Aventura Travels responsibility and sustainability position and details the processes involved in its maintenance and development. This policy is not exhaustive and will be updated on a frequent basis; as a minimum every six months.

2. Aims

At Aventura Travels sustainability and responsible travel is **central** our ethos and values.

Our aims fall into four distinct but equally important areas:

- Protecting and nurturing the environment, wildlife and ecology
- Adopting sustainable and ethical practices in our business (including our partners and suppliers)
- Sharing first-hand with clients the sustainability and conservation projects in our chosen destinations
- Reinvesting in local communities; be that education, health, safety or simply protecting the continued viability of their culture and traditions.

As a UK based tour operator, we have painstakingly checked and validated the credentials of all our partners and suppliers against these four important criteria.

This policy is purposely an ever-developing statement of our intent and actions. As new legislation is engrossed, as new initiatives and sustainability improvements present themselves, this policy will continually evolve to ensure Aventura Travels is always doing its utmost to deliver real and authentic adventure experiences in the most sustainable and responsible manner.

3. Environmental Responsibility

UK Office

Our sustainability efforts start "at home".

Every effort is made by staff both professionally and personally to reduce waste and to promote sustainable practices. Single-use plastics are not allowed in the office. Office cleaning is conducted using eco-friendly detergents and products.

Anything that can be recycled is. Paper, toner cartridges, batteries, mobile phones are recycled or disposed of in the most sustainable manner possible. Aventura Travels **only** produces electronic brochures.

The office building has recently (October 2019) been re-insulated to meet the latest standards for heat efficiency. The heating system is timer-based to limit waste. LED lighting is used throughout the office.

Our customer documentation contains the Aventura Travels Code of Conduct which sets out the minimum standards of behaviour, courtesy and environmental awareness we expect from our guests [See Section 6].

Our Local Partners and Suppliers

All partners have eliminated the use of single-use plastic water bottles and have replaced with reusable water containers.

We and our partners **do not** promote any captive animal experiences other than those required to protect and nurture endangered species. Such operations must demonstrate they are operating to the highest ethical, welfare and ecological standards - as independently audited by an NGO, charity or government approved body, before being considered.

Some notable initiatives include:

Water for Cambodia – installing filters to ensure local communities have safe, clean water.

HeroRats – supporting APOPO train mine detection rats in supporting the clearance of war ordinance and return safe land back to the communities.

Arenal Volcano, Costa Rica – contribute to the experiments and assist the collection of research samples under the guidance of world-renown volcanologist Gino González.

Visit to BRAVE, Cape Town - BRAVE provides a safe space for girls between the ages of 10-14 in an afterschool leadership workshop and holiday programme, helping them gain confidence, resilience and life skills to stay in school.

4. Economic Responsibility

Avventura Travels is firmly committed to “local delivery”. This stance is defined by our commitment to **only** use local guides and tour support staff. Avventura Travels does not employ Tour Leaders from the UK; all tour leaders, guides and support staff are **always** 100% local.

Whilst not always possible, Avventura Travels and its partners endeavour to work with locally owned accommodation rather than international chains. This is augmented with a proactive approach to using properties that use ethically sourced local produce.

Through our partners, Avventura Travels supports local NGOs and charitable bodies. All direct contributions will be undertaken through and in consultation with our local partners, ensuring that investment has a local focus and is made in the most appropriate and beneficial manner possible.

5. Social Responsibility

All our partners actively give priority to local suppliers and service providers that demonstrate an active stance regarding their employees social and economic rights.

All our partners abide by the WTO Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism and must prove they have adopted a “zero tolerance” position.

All our partners take positive steps to ensure their employees are treated fairly and all abide by the prevailing national employment legislation as a minimum; invariably exceeding such legislation.

Our tours and tailor-made itineraries provide the opportunity to visit local social projects either as an included activity or as an optional excursion. All such projects are vetted to ensure they provide either financial, social or community benefit.

Zero tolerance

Avventura Travels and its partners will **not tolerate under any circumstances** the following actions by guests. If suspected or proven, this would result in the immediate cessation of their holiday and would be reported to the appropriate authorities:

- Any kind of sexual tourism activities whatsoever
- Any aggressive and/or discriminatory behaviour whatsoever
- The removal or purchase of any artefacts, relics or similar
- The trafficking or purchase of any endemic endangered animals or organic matter or items made from the same.

Every itinerary has an up to date information pack that accompanies the client fulfilment documentation. An important part of this pack is the **Avventura Travels Code of Conduct**. This code outlines the standards expected by our guests; from behaviour and conduct through to environmental and social best practice guidelines. As per this overall policy, the code will be amended and updated on a continuous basis to ensure our guests travel in the most responsible manner possible.

6. Avventura Travels Code of Conduct

Below is the core Avventura Travels Code of Conduct that forms part of our booking fulfilment documentation prior to guest travel [Please note specifics are tailored to the destination being visited].

Travel is an enriching experience allowing us to learn, grow and question. It allows us to become more aware of our amazing planet and its rich and diverse lands and cultures. It is therefore important that we preserve, respect and support the places we journey to and the people we meet.

What do we expect?

We expect that you will fully support Avventura Travels in being an ethical and responsible travel company that takes the utmost care to:

- *Behave responsibly and respect people regardless of colour, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, sexuality or disability.*
- *“Leave no trace” on the habitats and communities visited*
- *Actively protect and preserve the endemic flora and fauna*
- *Be environmentally aware and considerate by conserving water and energy where possible, and*
- *“Leave as you find.”*

Conduct and behaviour

It is of vital importance that you conduct yourself and behave in a culturally sensitive manner. We expect our guests to be both polite and respectful to local people, their fellow guests and our local staff.

We expect our guests to be mindful of local customs. Your guides will brief you when you arrive on the cultural “dos” and “don’ts”. Here are some of the most important considerations for [Destination(s)]:

- 1) *[country/destination specific 1]*
- 2) *[country/destination specific 2]*
- 3) *etc.*

Visiting religious or sacred sites and buildings

Visits to religious or sacred sites may form part of your local immersion and experience. Your guide will provide specific guidance but please be aware that you will invariably need to be dressed appropriately and conduct oneself with decency and with a respect for the solemnity of the location.

*You should **always** seek guidance and permission before taking photographs of or conversing with local clerical staff in religious or sacred settings.*

Tipping and begging

Receiving gratuities can be a way of life for some. Your guide will provide local guidance on tipping; the protocols, its appropriateness, prevalence and level.

Begging can unfortunately also be a part of everyday life and is regularly orchestrated behind the scenes by organised teams or gangs. If approached, the general guidance is to politely decline. Do not hand out anything without seeking advice from your guides. In many places, such “generosity” only serves to fuel a begging mentality. We recommend that should you wish to give something, please seek advice from your guide who will recommend a recognised local charity/NGO for such donations.

Reducing water consumption

Many destinations suffer from acute clean water shortages. By managing your consumption while travelling you will contribute directly to conserving essential water supplies. Leaving taps running, excessive toilet flushing and having baths rather than showers all use up this vital local resource we take for granted.

Other environmental considerations

Water is not the only scarce resource and other activities can help limit our personal impact, such as:

- *Avoiding leaving lights on and phones or electronic equipment on constant charge*
- *Minimising the use of air conditioning equipment*
- *Not using single-use plastics and plastic bags*
- *Disposing of litter and waste materials in an appropriate manner (always seek local guidance if unsure)*
- *Not removing any objects from their natural environment*
- *Ensuring personal toiletries are biodegradable and environmentally safe.*

Zero tolerance

*Avventura Travels and its partners will **not tolerate** the following:*

- *Any kind of sexual tourism activities whatsoever*
- *Any aggressive and/or discriminatory behaviour whatsoever*
- *The removal or purchase of any artefacts, relics or similar*
- *The trafficking or purchase of any endemic endangered animals or organic matter or items made from the same.*

Supporting the local community

Wherever possible, purchase locally made gifts and crafts that contribute to the economic development of the local community.

Wherever possible, the accommodation we promote uses responsibly produced local ingredients and produce.

All Avventura Travel interactions during community visits are carefully crafted to be meaningful, authentic and symbiotic with local people and their culture. Local communities are opening up their families, customs and traditions for you to experience and enjoy – please fully respect this as a personal gesture to you as their valued guest.

Feedback is welcome

Should you feel that any of the above guidelines are not being adhered to or upheld fully, Avventura Travels would like to know. Your feedback and suggestions will be welcome and can be provided by email via customerservices@avventuratravels.com or directly to our office on +44 1604 961931.

7. Future Considerations

The business is committed to introducing further sustainability and responsibility best practice initiatives.

These would include:

- Setting, measuring and reporting on realistic sustainability & responsibility objectives.
- Development of familiarisation trips to enhance the awareness of what Avventura Travels and its partners are doing but also to promote the responsible travel agenda as a whole.