



Nature Trail Responsible Tourism Policy

Nature Trail believes that it is possible to operate successfully in the eco-tourism sector of the industry, ensuring the best value for money and top-quality service by our expert team while at the same time preserving the natural and cultural heritage of an area through promotion of sustainable tourism. We conduct all our trips with a vigilant eye to try and avoid any disturbance to the local ecology or way of life and continuously strive to make sure traveling with Nature Trail Trekking in Nepal and elsewhere provides the customer with an exciting and memorable lifetime experience and has minimum impact on the local environment and gives economic benefits to local communities.

Objectives:

- Minimize negative and maximize positive impacts of tourism on the environment, culture and economy.
- Conserve the environment and give back to local communities.
- Promote tourism in Nepal through responsible tourism.
- Make tourists aware of and encourage them to be involved in responsible tourism practices.
- Comply with sustainability criteria and eventually become certified member of Travelife – Sustainability in Tourism.

Environment:

- We take responsibility for the conservation of the environment by taking environmental aspects into consideration when making economic decisions and by financially supporting several projects that aim at conserving the environment in Nepal – examples: Himalayan Environmental and Cultural Awareness Center (HECAC – own project) and Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (KEEP).
- We encourage our staff and customers to avoid using plastic bottles and bags and instead use filtered water provided in the office and many hotels and to purify the water while trekking.
- We inform our customers about responsible travel with guidelines on what to do and what not to do while traveling in Nepal.
- We aim to reduce energy use in the office by using energy saving light bulbs, by completely switching off all electronic equipment when not in use and by using electronic heaters in winter only when absolutely necessary.

- As much as possible we contract with suppliers (hotels and activities) that also take their impacts on the environment into consideration.

Socio-Cultural:

- Our staff is well-paid compared to average standards in the tourism industry in Nepal. They are fully insured and each year our employees have 2 months extra pay – one month during their annual holiday and one month during Dashain Festival. We provide superannuation and provident fund for each staff member.
- Field employees receive tour allowances and they are adequately insured against accidents during tours, trekking and expeditions.
- We provide training each year: language, first-aid and guiding.
- We believe in equal rights and refrain from negative as well as positive discrimination when hiring staff.
- We do not employ child labor and we have a zero tolerance policy for any form of sexual abuse.
- We use local workforce, resources and products when conducting all tours and trekking expeditions.
- We offer and encourage village tourism and support rural development projects (HECAC).
- We ensure that our tours do not exceed local carrying capacity by offering small scale tours and activities that are appropriate according to the local standards.

Economy:

- We use locally owned suppliers whenever possible instead of international hotels for instance in order to decrease leakage and increase foreign exchange earnings in the country
- We support local business in order to ensure that income stays in the community
- We are motivated to develop long-term business relationships within our supply chain in order to establish long-lasting partnerships that are economically stable.
- We support rural development projects by contributing 20% of the profit generated each trading year, thereby, have directly uplifted the living standard of the local residents and contributed to the national economy of Nepal and its neighbors.
- We have maintained transparent books of accounts for which a qualified professional has been hired. A government approved tax auditor prepares all the Profit and Loss account balance sheet at the end of each fiscal year. On the basis of which, we pay 25% of gross profit to the government. Until now, we have cleared all the taxes and also paid advance tax for the running year.