



SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Lotus Asia Tours believe that it is our responsibility as a travel agency to minimize the negative impacts and protect the fragile ecosystem where we operate, while supporting and empowering the community that depend on them.

With this in mind, Lotus Asia Tours commit to:

- Comply with all relevant national legislation and regulations.
- Ensure that sustainability is at the core of our business and considered seriously into every business decisions.
- Continually improve the environmental and social sustainability performance.
- Strive to achieve international best practice in key areas of environmental management including energy efficiency, waste/pollution management (especially prevention), and water conservation.
- Support local economies and local environmental/social initiatives.
- Raise sustainability awareness both internally and externally.

We ensure the enforcement of our commitment above by operating in line with the following policies:

For our employees

- Pay fair living wages equal or above the minimum wage.
- Ensure equal opportunities for all our employee without discrimination.
- Respect the rights of our workforce to participate in trade unions discussions regulations or collective labour agreements.
- Provide health and safety standards for our employees through medical insurance and maternity leave.
- Ensure comfortable working conditions for our employees.
- Refuse child labour and all forms of forced and compulsory labour.
- Provide regular awareness and capacity building, training and opportunities for our staff
- Offer traineeships / internships to students.
- Have a clear complaints procedure to ensure staff aspiration or concerns are represented to senior management.

For our office

- Implement sustainable procurement in our purchasing decisions by following the criteria below:
 - Preference for locally produced items that promote local culture and heritage.
 - Reuse / fix what is available as much as possible instead of buying a new one.
 - Choose natural/non-toxic products and energy/water efficient equipment.
 - Avoid single use/disposable items and un-recyclable products (ex: No Styrofoam, plastic bags, straws and bottles).
 - Opt for products that can be reused many times and recycled at the end of its life
 - Buy in bulk or with minimal packaging.
 - Consider sustainable purchasing for events, meetings, give-away and gifts.
- Meetings and events are organized with zero waste in mind:
 - Provide water / drink refill stations with glasses instead of individual plastic water bottles/cups or disposable cups. Avoid plastic / paper straws.



- For snacks, opt for fruits or locally made snacks wrapped in banana leaf/natural material instead of individually plastic-wrapped snacks.
- Avoid printing materials whenever possible, choose to email material to participants or copy to flash disk.
- Pencil instead of plastic pens, and only by request.
- Provide writing note pads only upon request.
- Actively reduce water, energy and paper consumption with measurable goals:
 - Record water, energy and paper usage and set goals for reduction.
 - Use energy efficient and water reduction equipment.
 - Use natural lights as much as possible during the day instead of lamps.
 - Implement a “switch off” (instead of stand-by mode) policy in the office for lights, ac and office equipment during breaks and after office hours.
 - Ensure doors and windows are closed when AC is on. Regularly clean AC. Try at 24 degrees or above to lower energy consumption.
 - Regularly check and fix leaks in water pipes system.
 - Print both sides of paper, use recycled paper, avoid printing if not really necessary.
- Waste is reduced, separated, recycled and disposed of properly:
 - Separate waste into recyclables and trash that goes to landfill.
 - Set a goal to reduce all waste in general but trash that goes into landfill in particular.
 - Use rechargeable batteries and avoid cordless mouse to reduce battery waste that are still difficult to handle/recycle.
 - Refill ink and toner instead of buying new ones.
 - Minimize and substitute the use of harmful substances, including pesticides, paints, and cleaning materials, by harmless products and processes. All storage, handling and disposal of chemicals is properly managed.
 - Printing is avoided where possible. Put preference in using digital form (emails, google drive, e-brochures, e-sales catalogue, e-itineraries, etc).
 - Company vehicles are well maintained and checked regularly to reduce emissions and energy use.
- All staff members receive regular sustainability training and information:
 - Key staff are encouraged to go through Travelife basic training and exam.
 - All staff are encouraged to go through the Internal Environmental Management module from Travelife online course, and take the exam.
 - Specific modules are also available for relevant staff interested or responsible for the issue.
 - Regular training / info session will also be conducted informally in the office through country coordinators / Sustainability-Team (S-Team), and also from email newsletters.
 - Awareness and engagement are delivered through periodic email newsletter, quizzes, games, challenges with desirable prizes.

For our suppliers

- Inform all our suppliers of our commitment and active pursuit towards sustainability using Travelife as a tool and encourage them to join process.
- Discourage our suppliers to promote souvenirs which contain threatened species as indicated in the CITES treaty and the IUCN ‘Red List’ as well as historic and archaeological artefacts.



- Respect basic human rights (no compulsory or forced labour) and fight against child labour and sexual exploitation of children.
- Have a sustainability accommodation policy in place to develop and implement long term strategy to improve the sustainability of its contracted accommodations:
 - Contracted accommodations are stimulated to participate in local or international sustainability training and education when it's offered in the destination.
 - Preference is given to accommodation with certificates acknowledged by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), otherwise to accommodation with good and verifiable reputation on sustainability behaviour.
 - Preference is given to locally-owned, independent accommodation and restaurants that incorporate elements of local art, architecture or cultural heritage and implement sustainability practices.
- Ensure that our excursions are developed with sustainability in mind:
 - Where available, preference is given to activities and attractions who operate on the basis of acknowledged and controlled sustainability standards.
 - Avoid offering activities that harm people, animals and the environment .
 - Avoid excursions and attractions in which captive wildlife is held, except for properly regulated activities in compliance with local, national and international law.
 - In case of violation, we will clearly inform the provider and discontinue offering the activity to our client.
 - Uphold the internationally recognized benchmark for animal's physical and mental well-being, the Five Freedoms, which are: 1. Freedom from hunger and thirst: nutritious food and clean water; 2. Freedom from discomfort: a suitable living environment that provides shelter, opportunities to rest and considers the species-specific needs of wild animals; 3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease: preventative and curative health care; 4. Freedom to express normal behaviour: living space that encourages natural behaviour; 5. Freedom from fear and distress: appropriate areas to seek privacy and limited human contact.
 - Lotus Asia Tours ensures that 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.
 - Excursions which include interactions with free roaming wildlife comply with relevant codes of conduct. Taking into account cumulative impacts, they are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse effects on the animals concerned and on the viability and behaviour of populations in the wild.
 - In sensitive cultural sites, heritage sites or ecologically sensitive destinations, guests will be guided by skilled or certified guides.
 - Include activities that directly involve and support local communities, local environment and biodiversity protection.
- Ensure that our guides and tour leaders are aware of our sustainability commitments and are supported to practice them:
 - Practice environmental, cultural and social responsible conduct, and able to communicate them to travellers.
 - Preference are given to local guides, fair employment and labour conditions are guaranteed..



- Promote sustainable transportation options to our clients where possible (considering comfort and price) and a choice to compensate their carbon emissions

For our local community

- Support local community projects / initiatives that promote environmental protection, conservation or cultural heritage.
- Do not promote souvenirs which contain threatened flora and fauna species as indicated in the CITES treaty and the IUCN 'Red List'.
- Support local purchasing when quality, service, availability and price allow.
- Work with social enterprises of local producers to provide giveaways for clients or local souvenirs.
- Support and encourage local SMEs on sustainable local livelihood development (such as CBT, community guesthouse, restaurants and local transportation modes).

For our customers

- Provide clients relevant and accurate information about the destination and activities including safety, health and security.
- Our product and price information including our sustainability claims is clear, complete and accurate without embellishment or greenwashing.
- Ensure travellers' privacy, health and safety and insurance:
 - Provide customers with a 24h reachable contact and guidelines in case of emergency situations.
 - Take into account clients' satisfaction and complaint.
- Raise awareness about responsible tourism principles:
 - Inform our customers about our sustainable commitments.
 - Communicate to our clients about sustainable offers (sustainable accommodations and excursions).
 - Provide travellers information about rules and regulations in sensitive areas (national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, protected areas), illegal souvenirs, preference for local services and goods, respect of traditional culture and customs, sustainable transport, sexual exploitation, protection and respect of children, and detrimental effects of orphanage visits.

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Lotus Asia Tours