

Sustainability Policy

Royal Mountain Travel is a Nepal-based sustainable tourism operator. We specialize in curating once-in-a-lifetime experiences to showcase indigenous and community based tourism projects. We work with travel agents and tourism companies to help plan travel experiences that highlight authentic, local lifestyles throughout some of the most unique landscapes on earth.

At Royal Mountain Travel, we are guided by our vision to develop tourism sustainably and to ensure that local communities, particularly women benefit from tourist activities. To set ourselves apart and lead by example, we've implemented sustainable initiatives in all parts of our organization. From creating off-the-beaten-path itineraries so tourism dollars reach remote areas to developing programs that empower women to take leadership roles, we are committed to helping improve the lives of the local people. Our approach is simple: We seek to offer visitors something different: genuine experiences designed sustainably with an eye for a positive impact. We are guided by the following three pillars in our approach:

Environmental Stewardship	Community Empowerment	Giving Back
---------------------------	-----------------------	-------------

Our Sustainability Policy is further divided into the following five broader themes:

- ❖ Our commitment to our people
- ❖ Our commitment to our clients
- ❖ Our commitment to the planet
- ❖ Our commitment to local communities
- ❖ Our commitment to sustainability management

Our commitment to our people

We do not hinder trade union membership, collective labor negotiations and representation of members by trade unions;

We prohibit discrimination in relation to recruitment, conditions of employment, access to training and senior positions, or promotion in terms of gender, race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion/beliefs or sexual orientation;

We ensure all employees have an equal chance and access to resources and opportunities for personal development through regular training, education;

We grant employees the freedom of employment and contract termination with notice and without penalty;

We provide health insurance coverage for interested staff and their immediate dependent family members. RMT pays 50% of the premium and staff has to pay the remaining 50%.

We grant employees fixed paid yearly holiday and sick leave and unpaid annual leave allowance;
We provide ample training opportunities to staff for their personal development;
We implement high standards of health and safety for our employees;
We have first aid sets and trained staff in our office;
We obey national laws concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment;
We have a measurement system in place for employee satisfaction;
We create opportunities for students in participating in traineeship/internship/apprenticeship which in most cases lead to full-time employment;
We provide healthy and hygienic lunch at the office for all our staff;
We offer flexible working hours to our staff;
We host regular staff dinner and gatherings;
We require our staff to do a self-evaluation. Based on the self-evaluation and appraisal form, salary increment for the upcoming year is decided;
We prefer to work with local tour leaders, local representatives, local tour guides, porters, drivers, cooks, and other local staff in case of equal ability, and provide training as required;
We take measures to ensure that our local partners comply with all applicable national, and local laws and regulations;
We pay our tour leaders, local representatives, guides, porters and other local staff contracted by us fairly;
Salary of our tour leaders are confirmed through consultation with our partners such as G Adventures;
For freelance guide, trekking guides and porters, we comply with the salary guidelines given by their association such as Nepal Tourist Guide Association, Nepal Trekking Guide Association and Nepal Porter's Association;
We ensure that our tour guides, hosts, and other employees under contract are qualified and trained regularly;
We require our tour leaders, local representatives and guides to inform clients on relevant sustainability matters in the destination;
We provide consultations to our tour leaders and local representatives on prevention of child abuse;

Our commitment to our clients

We make our sustainability commitments and actions accessible to the public;
We ensure that customer privacy is not compromised;
We comply with relevant standards and voluntary codes of conduct in marketing and advertising messages, and do not promise more than is delivered;
We make product and price information clear, complete and accurate;
We promote sustainable accommodations, excursions, packages and/or transport options where possible;
We keep a contact person and telephone number permanently available for emergency situations;
We motivate clients to use local restaurants and shops (where appropriate);
We encourage clients to donate to local charity and sustainable initiatives;
We measure systematically client satisfaction and take into account the results, for service and product improvements;

Our commitment to the planet

Our offices are powered by climate friendly solar panels;
We have a no single-use plastic policy in our office;
We provide all our staff with refillable metal water bottles;
We give preference to sustainable goods and services;
We purchase products in bulk as much as possible to reduce the amount of packaging materials;
We print our magazines on eco-friendly paper;
We use recycled paper for business cards;
We have monthly audits to reduce electricity and water leakages;
We partner with a local waste recycling company to reduce and recycle waste and to properly dispose of batteries;
We conduct carbon-offsetting activities;
We purchase energy efficient lighting for all areas, when available;

We switch off lights and equipment when not in use;
We prefer low energy equipment when buying new items while taking into consideration the cost and quality;
We install water saving equipment in toilets;
We incentivize our staff to use electric vehicles and bikes by making charging ports available;
We maintain and properly check motorized company vehicles, to reduce emissions and energy use and make sure they comply with the legal emission standards,
We provide periodic guidance, training and/or information to all staff members, about their roles and responsibilities with respect to internal environmental practices;
We select the most sustainable options considering feasibility when selecting transport options to the destination;
We use electric vehicles for travel within Kathmandu whenever possible;
We keep an inventory of sustainable packages and offer these as products to our clients;
We give preference to hotels that engage in more sustainable practices given consumer preferences;
We give preference to accommodations that are locally owned and managed;
We require our key suppliers to fill in the sustainability questionnaire to evaluate their sustainability performance;
We give preference to accommodations and restaurants that incorporate elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage; while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities;
We keep an inventory of environmentally or culturally sensitive excursions which are offered in Nepal;
Our tour guides advise guests on behaviour standards during excursions and activities with a focus on respecting the local culture, nature, and environment;
We do not offer any excursions that harm humans, animals, plants, natural resources such as water and energy, or which are socially and culturally unacceptable;
We do not offer any excursions in which wildlife is held captive, except for properly regulated activities in compliance with local, national, and international law;
We follow G Adventures animal and wildlife policy https://media.gadventures.com/media-server/dynamic/admin/flatpages/Animal_Welfare_Guidelines_-_Policy.pdf ;
We consider sustainability aspects in the selection process of new destinations and offer alternative, non-mainstream destinations;

We do not promote souvenirs which contain threatened flora and fauna species as indicated in the CITES treaty and the IUCN 'Red List'; or historic and archaeological artefacts (except as permitted by law);

Our commitment to local communities

We promote and advise our guests on excursions and activities which directly involve and support local communities by purchasing services or goods, traditional crafts and local (food) production methods, or visiting social projects;

We promote and advise our guests on excursions and activities which support local environment and biodiversity;

We work to develop new tourist destinations so that new communities can benefit from tourist activities;

We provide regular trainings to community homestay owners within our network;

We support local non-profits:

- ❖ Kiran Namaste, an organization that supports single mothers in Nepal
- ❖ We sponsor the Garimudi school in Nuwakot and Shree Jagadamba Higher Secondary School in Madhela, Bardiya
- ❖ We provide financial assistance to Rural Assistance Nepal (RAN) which sets up schools and hospitals in remote regions of Nepal

Our commitment to sustainability management

We have a dedicated department which has the following mandates:

- ❖ Develop a yearly sustainability action plan in consultation with all staff and monitor and evaluate efforts;
- ❖ Develop a metrics system to record and update the company's impact and sustainability related efforts;
- ❖ Design and implement mechanisms for internal communication regarding impact and sustainability;
- ❖ Design and implement mechanisms for communicating our impact and sustainability efforts to clients, partners and other stakeholders;

We pay attention to the sustainability performance of our key suppliers;

We have a yearly sustainability action plan with clear targets, actions, measures, responsibilities and time planning;

We have documented procedures to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the targets set out in our yearly action plan;

We ensure that our employees are informed on relevant aspects of our sustainability policy through newsletters and other means of communication;

We ensure that all staff are fully aware of our Sustainability Policy and are committed to implementing and improving it;

We revise our sustainability policy annually;

We are Travelife certified which means we comply with more than 160 criteria related to sustainability management, office operations, working with suppliers and customer communication.

Royal Mountain Travel is a Travelife Certified company. Travelife is accredited by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), the world's leading accreditation body for sustainable travel and tourism and it oversees both management and performance criteria in relation to sustainability.