Royal Mountain Group Sustainability Policy

Approved by: Shiva Dhakal, Chairperson

Scope: This policy applies to all subsidiaries of Royal Mountain Group, including:

- Royal Mountain Travel
- Community Homestay Network
- Inside Himalayas
- AVATA Wellness Center
- Traditional Comfort & Traditional Stay Hotels
- Bricks Cafe

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1. Purpose

At Royal Mountain Group, we believe tourism can be a powerful force for positive change. This Sustainability Policy defines our commitment to embedding sustainable and ethical practices throughout our operations, community partnerships, travellers experiences, and corporate governance. Our aim is to contribute meaningfully to environmental protection, socio-cultural preservation, economic equity, and responsible tourism in our operations

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2. Our Vision for Sustainable Tourism

We envision a future where tourism:

- Is **community-driven** and strengthens local livelihoods.
- **Respects and safeguards culture**, heritage, and traditions.
- **Protects the natural environment** and supports biodiversity.
- Ensures **fair, inclusive, and ethical** economic development.
- Becomes a **tool for education and global understanding**, creating empowered hosts and informed guests.

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3. Key Pillars of Our Sustainability Commitment

A. Environmental Responsibility

We strive to minimize our ecological impact through the following measures:

i. Carbon Management & Green Mobility

- Promoting low-impact transportation such as walking tours, cycling, and shared vehicles where possible.
- Encouraging the use of public transport and fuel-efficient vehicles in our operations and travel experiences.

- Gradually introducing electric or hybrid vehicles into our fleet and encouraging partners to do the same.
- Raising awareness among travelers and staff about carbon-conscious choices in travel.
- **Staff Travel:** Staff are encouraged to walk, cycle, carpool or use public transport for commuting and local work travel; to use video or phone meetings instead of travelling where practical; to combine trips and share vehicles; and to choose air travel only when no practical alternative exists. Business travel and fuel use will be recorded at least annually so that it can be monitored and reduced.

ii. Energy Efficiency

- Use renewable energy where possible (e.g., solar water heating in properties).
- Upgrade to LED lighting, energy-efficient appliances, and smart energy monitoring systems.
- Train staff to practice and promote energy-saving behaviors.
- **Low Energy Equipment:** When purchasing or replacing appliances and lighting, low-energy models (e.g., energy-rated equipment and LED bulbs) are given preference, and the energy rating is considered alongside price and quality.
- **Energy Reduction:** Each subsidiary will measure its electricity and fuel (LPG, diesel, firewood) consumption at least monthly, set annual reduction targets, and review progress and corrective actions with the Sustainability Coordinator.
- **Equipment "Switch-Off":** Computers, printers, air conditioners, heaters, televisions, kitchen and other electrical equipment must be switched off, or set to power-saving mode, when not in use and at the end of the working day, unless continuous operation is essential (e.g., refrigeration).
- **Light "Switch-Off":** Lights must be switched off in unoccupied rooms, offices, and common areas. Natural light is used wherever possible, and timers or motion sensors are encouraged in corridors and shared spaces. Guests are reminded through simple notices and orientation.

iii. Waste Management

- Reduce single-use plastics by gradually replacing them with reusable or biodegradable alternatives (e.g., bamboo straws, cloth bags, glass water bottles).
- Provide refillable water stations at our properties and encourage guests to carry reusable bottles.
- Implement basic waste segregation systems (organic, recyclable, and landfill) at all properties.
- Start small-scale composting where feasible and collaborate with local waste collectors or recyclers.
- Educate staff and guests on proper waste disposal and responsible consumption habits.
- **Waste Reduction:** We follow the principle of reduce, reuse, recycle. Waste volumes are measured periodically and reduction targets are set for each property. Food waste is minimized through careful planning and portion control in cafes and hotels; reusable items are donated or repurposed where possible; and hazardous waste (e.g., batteries, electronic waste, used oil, chemicals) is stored separately and handed over only to authorised collectors or recyclers.

iv. Water Conservation

- Installing water-saving fixtures such as low-flow showerheads and faucets wherever possible.
- Using dual-flush or water-efficient toilets in newly built or renovated bathrooms.
- Providing training to staff and hosts on water-saving practices.

- Starting small-scale rainwater harvesting in suitable locations, particularly for gardening and cleaning use.
- Monitoring water usage periodically to identify leaks or inefficiencies and take corrective actions.
- **Water Reduction:** Water consumption is recorded at least monthly at each property and annual reduction targets are set. Leaks and dripping taps are reported and repaired promptly; guests are encouraged to reuse towels and linen; gardens are watered early or late in the day using harvested rainwater where possible; and water-saving reminders are displayed in guest rooms and staff areas.

v. Wildlife & Biodiversity Protection

- Prohibit any form of wildlife performances, animal rides, or exploitative captive encounters (e.g., posing with wild animals).
- Only promote visits to wildlife sanctuaries, rescue centers, or national parks that follow ethical standards and contribute to conservation.
- Encourage guests to engage in respectful wildlife experiences, such as guided safaris, birdwatching, or nature walks that do not disturb natural behavior.
- Educate travelers and staff on avoiding the purchase of wildlife products (e.g., fur, ivory, or exotic pets) and respecting local conservation laws.

vi. Pollution Reduction

- **Pollution Reduction:** We will prevent and minimize pollution from our operations by:
- Using environmentally friendly, biodegradable cleaning, laundry and pest-control products wherever available, and storing all chemicals safely.
- Not burning waste in the open and not dumping waste or untreated wastewater into rivers, drains, or open land; using septic tanks, soak pits or treatment systems at properties.
- Keeping vehicles and generators well maintained, avoiding unnecessary idling, and limiting generator use.
- Keeping noise and light pollution low, especially near homestays, villages, and wildlife areas.
- Training staff to identify, report and correct pollution risks.

B. Socio-Cultural Integrity

We honor the identity and agency of our host communities and aim to foster meaningful cultural exchanges:

i. Cultural Preservation

- Co-create tourism experiences that celebrate traditional practices, rituals, cuisine, and heritage.
- Avoid commodifying or romanticizing culture; instead, support self-representation.

ii. Empowerment of Women & Marginalized Groups

- Prioritize women-led homestays and entrepreneurs through the **Community Homestay Network**.
- Ensure opportunities for people from minority and disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Support leadership and decision-making roles for local women in tourism governance.

iii. Support for Arts and Culture

- Engage local artists, craftspeople, musicians, and performers as storytellers and hosts.
- Promote the preservation of endangered crafts and traditional knowledge.

iv. Child Protection

We adhere to global child safeguarding standards:

- Adopt a **zero-tolerance** policy toward the exploitation or abuse of children in tourism.
- Ban visits to orphanages and similar institutions as part of tour programs.
- Train staff, guides, and hosts on child protection practices and reporting protocols.
- Collaborate with child protection agencies and advocate for responsible tourism messaging.

C. Economic Equity & Local Empowerment

We believe tourism should directly and fairly benefit the people in the destinations we work with:

i. Local Sourcing & Procurement

- Prioritize local vendors and suppliers for food, amenities, decor, and souvenirs.
- Use locally grown, organic, and seasonal produce in cafes and wellness centers.

ii. Capacity Building

- Conduct training for guides, community hosts, and hospitality staff on service delivery, digital literacy, safety, and storytelling.
- Offer business development and marketing support to community-based tourism entrepreneurs.

iii. Fair Labor & Ethical Partnerships

- Ensure decent wages, safe working conditions, and non-discriminatory practices across all subsidiaries.
- Maintain long-term partnerships with small-scale producers, artisans, and cooperatives.

D. Responsible Travel & Guest Engagement

We actively involve travelers in our mission by promoting responsible tourism values:

i. Traveler Education

- Provide pre-arrival guides, cultural dos and don’ts, and sustainability tips.
- Encourage respectful engagement with host communities.

ii. Sustainable Tour Design

- Curate trips that minimize environmental impact and maximize local benefit.
- Offer alternative, immersive experiences such as farm stays, community treks, and local festivals.

iii. Sustainability Communication

- Publish impact stories, educational blogs, and destination insights through *Inside Himalayas* and social media.
- Engage guests in dialogue on responsible travel through orientation, feedback loops, and storytelling.

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4. Responsible Office Operations & Procurement

We apply our sustainability commitments to the daily running of our offices, properties, cafes and wellness centers, including how we buy, use and dispose of goods.

4.1 Reduction of Disposable and Consumable Goods

- We will measure and actively reduce our use of disposable and consumable goods, especially paper for internal office use.
- Each subsidiary will record its main consumption (paper, disposable cups, plates, cutlery, packaging, cleaning and office supplies) at least annually to set a baseline and reduction targets.
- Reusable alternatives (e.g., cups, cloth towels, refillable containers) are preferred over disposable ones; digital documents, e-mail and e-signatures replace paper where practical.
- Staff are informed of these targets, and progress is reported to the Sustainability Coordinator and in the annual Impact Report.

4.2 Sustainable Purchasing

- We favor sustainable suppliers and products whenever these are available and of sufficient quality.
- Preference is given to local, fair-trade, organic, recycled, recyclable, durable, repairable and energy- or water-efficient products, and to suppliers that follow ethical labor and environmental practices.
- Sustainability criteria (e.g., packaging, origin, certification, lifespan) are considered alongside price and quality when selecting suppliers, and are communicated to key suppliers.

4.3 Office Paper: Printing

- Copying and printing machines are set by default to double-sided (duplex) printing or other paper-saving modes.
- Documents are printed only when necessary; draft printing, reuse of single-sided paper, and recycled or certified paper are encouraged.
- Used paper is collected for recycling through the waste segregation system.

4.4 Bulk Purchasing

- Products are purchased in bulk (e.g., cleaning supplies, toiletries, food staples, stationery) whenever storage, shelf life and quality allow, to reduce the amount of packaging material.
- Suppliers are asked to use minimal, reusable or recyclable packaging and to take back packaging where possible; guest amenities are provided in refillable dispensers instead of individual sachets or bottles where practical.

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5. Governance and Transparency

Our sustainability governance includes:

- Appointment of a **Sustainability Coordinator** to manage implementation, monitoring, and reporting.
- Conducting **bi-annual internal and external audits** to evaluate progress and identify areas for improvement.
- Releasing annual **Impact Reports** outlining KPIs, stories, and milestones.
- Requiring all team members to understand and comply with this policy as part of their roles.
- Maintaining baseline data and annual reduction targets for electricity, fuel, water, waste, paper and disposable goods, tracked by the Sustainability Coordinator and included in the annual Impact Report.

6. Partnerships & Advocacy

We amplify our impact through collaboration and collective advocacy:

- Partner with organizations like **Planeterra, ICIMOD, PUM Netherlands**, and child and wildlife protection NGOs.
- Engage in tourism industry forums and multi-stakeholder platforms to share best practices.
- Advocate for community tourism, sustainability education, inclusive policy-making, and ethical tourism standards..

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7. Continuous Improvement

Sustainability is a journey, not a destination. We are committed to:

- Regularly updating this policy to reflect evolving industry standards and lessons learned.
- Encouraging innovation and feedback from travelers, communities, staff, and partners.
- Incorporating sustainability into the **design phase** of all new experiences, properties, and programs.
- Creating an organizational culture of curiosity, care, and accountability.

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8. Communication & Engagement

To ensure awareness and adoption of this policy, we will:

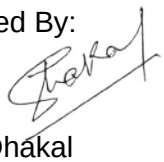
- Publish this policy on our **websites**, brochures, and partner channels.
- Integrate its principles into **staff onboarding, training**, and partner orientation.
- Promote the policy's visibility during stakeholder engagements, public presentations, and community visits.
- Review and revise this policy **annually** based on monitoring outcomes and stakeholder feedback.

Verified By:



Bikal Khanal
Chief Purpose Officer

Approved By:



Shiva Dhakal
Chairperson