Sustainable Accommodation Policy

1. Our Purpose and Commitment

Where our guests sleep shapes how they experience Nepal and the Himalaya. Every lodge, teahouse, homestay and hotel we work with is part of the story we tell, and part of the impact we leave behind.

At Royal Mountain Travel, we believe tourism should leave places better than we found them: cleaner rivers and trails, stronger local livelihoods, living cultures and proud communities. We cannot do this alone. Our accommodation partners are at the heart of it.

This policy is an invitation, not a checklist. It describes the practices we hope to grow together, celebrates what many of our partners already do, and sets out a small number of standards that protect people and nature and that we will never compromise on.

2. Scope

This policy applies to every accommodation provider Royal Mountain Travel contracts or books for its guests. That includes hotels, resorts, mountain lodges, teahouses, community homestays, jungle lodges, camps and boutique properties across Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and India.

There is no immediate requirement to meet the practices in Section 4. We understand that a family-run teahouse at 4,000 m and a city hotel in Kathmandu start from very different places. We ask only that partners take steps that make sense for them, at their own pace, and share their progress with us.

The Non-Negotiable Standards in Section 5 apply to all partners from the date of signing.

3. Guiding Principles

Four ideas guide everything in this policy.

- **People first.** Staff, neighbours and guests are treated with dignity, fairness and care.
- **Respect for nature.** Mountains, forests, rivers and wildlife are the reason guests come; we protect them.
- **Living culture.** Local traditions, food, architecture and language are shared with pride, never staged or exploited.
- **Local prosperity.** Tourism income should stay in the community as much as possible.

We also value honesty over perfection. A partner who openly shares challenges and small wins is a better partner than one who claims to have everything solved.

4. Sustainability Practices We Encourage

These are the practices we hope every partner will grow into over time. Start with the first steps that fit your property; the "leading the way" column shows where the journey can go.

Area	Good first steps	Leading the way
Energy	Switch to LED lighting; turn off lights, heaters and geysers when rooms are empty	Solar water heating or solar power; energy-efficient cooking stoves instead of firewood
Water	Fix leaks; offer towel and linen reuse; low-flow taps and showers	Rainwater harvesting; greywater reuse for gardens; protect local springs
Single-use plastic	Offer free filtered or boiled drinking water refills; stop plastic bottles, straws and toiletry minis in rooms	A fully single-use-plastic-free property, including the kitchen and suppliers
Waste	Separate waste into organic, recyclable and residual; never burn plastic	Composting kitchen waste; sending recyclables to proper centres; carrying waste down from trekking areas
Local sourcing	Buy vegetables, dairy, grains and tea from nearby farmers	A menu built around seasonal, local and organic produce; local crafts in rooms and shops
Staff and fair work	Written contracts, fair and timely pay, safe housing and rest days	Training, career growth and women in leadership roles; staff share in service charges
Community	Hire locally first; tell guests about local guides, shops and initiatives	Support a school, health post, clean-up or forest project; involve the community in decisions
Culture and heritage	Share local stories, food and customs respectfully; brief guests on dress and etiquette	Traditional architecture and materials; cultural experiences led and owned by the community
Nature and wildlife	Keep lighting and noise low near habitats; no wildlife products for sale	Native planting; supporting conservation partners; guest education on Himalayan ecosystems

Area	Good first steps	Leading the way
Accessibility and inclusion	Welcome every guest equally; share honest information on access	Accessible rooms and paths; training staff to support guests with different needs
Guest engagement	Simple in-room notes on saving water, energy and refills	Sustainability storytelling as part of the stay; inviting guests into local projects

We would also love partners to work towards recognised certification, such as Travelife, Green Key or GSTC-recognised standards, when they feel ready. This is encouraged, not required.

5. Non-Negotiable Standards (Termination Clause)

A small number of practices cause serious harm to people or nature. These are not part of a gradual journey. Any confirmed breach of the standards below gives Royal Mountain Travel the right to suspend bookings immediately and terminate the partnership agreement without penalty.

1. **No child labour.** No person under 14 is employed in any capacity, and no person under 18 does hazardous work, night work or heavy labour, in line with the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of Nepal and ILO conventions.
2. **No child exploitation.** Zero tolerance for any form of sexual exploitation or abuse of children. Partners must report suspected cases to the authorities and to us. We encourage partners to sign The Code (child protection in tourism).
3. **No forced labour or human trafficking.** No bonded labour, withheld wages, confiscated identity documents or restricted movement of staff.
4. **No abuse, harassment or discrimination.** No physical, sexual or verbal abuse of staff or guests, and no discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability or sexual orientation.
5. **No wildlife cruelty or illegal trade.** No sale, serving or display of endangered species or their products; no captive wild animals for entertainment; no elephant rides or animal performances.
6. **Legal operation.** A valid business registration and tourism licence, and compliance with labour, tax and environmental laws.
7. **Guest and staff safety.** Basic fire safety, safe electrical and gas installations, first aid, and safe drinking water. Any serious incident must be reported to us within 24 hours.

8. **No serious environmental harm.** No dumping of waste or sewage into rivers, lakes or forests; no open burning of plastic; no illegal logging or encroachment on protected areas.
9. **Honesty and integrity.** No bribery, fraud or deliberate misrepresentation to guests or to Royal Mountain Travel.

Where a concern is raised, we will first seek facts and, where it is safe and appropriate, give the partner a chance to explain. Breaches involving children, trafficking or violence lead to immediate termination.

6. How We Work Together

Sustainability is a shared journey, and we want to walk it with you.

What we offer partners

- Practical guidance, simple tools and examples from other properties in our network
- Introductions to local suppliers, recycling and composting initiatives, and certification bodies
- Feedback from guests on what they value in sustainable stays
- Occasional workshops and partner gatherings to share ideas

What we ask of partners

- Read this policy and share it with your team
- Choose one or two practices from Section 4 to start with
- Answer a short sustainability questionnaire once a year, so we can celebrate progress and see where support is needed
- Welcome an occasional visit from our team

If something goes wrong

Outside the Non-Negotiable Standards, we will raise concerns in a spirit of partnership. We will agree on practical steps and a reasonable timeline together. Guests, staff or community members can share concerns with us confidentially at any time.

7. Recognising Partners Who Lead the Way

We want to celebrate the people making a difference. Partners who show real progress may be:

- Featured as a sustainable stay in our itineraries, website and social media
- Given preference when we design new trips and community-based experiences

- Highlighted to guests and international agents who look for responsible travel
- Invited to share their story at partner gatherings and industry events

Every small step counts. A teahouse that removes plastic bottles or a homestay that hires its neighbours is as worthy of celebration as a hotel with solar panels.

8. Policy Review and Partner Acknowledgement

Royal Mountain Travel will review this policy every year, taking into account partner feedback, guest expectations and changes in law and good practice. Partners will be informed of any changes.

By signing below, the accommodation partner confirms that it has read this policy, will comply with the Non-Negotiable Standards in Section 5, and shares our intention to work towards the practices in Section 4.

	Accommodation Partner	Royal Mountain Travel
Property name		Royal Mountain Travel Pvt. Ltd.
Name		
Position		
Signature		