

# Polar Star

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## TRAVEL



## Sustainability Policy and Guideline

2023

## **Missio**

Lisätä rakkauden määrää vieras kerrallaan.

## **Visio**

Polar Star Travel on Tunturi-Lapin rakastetuin ja tunnetuin ympärivuotisesti toimiva kestävä kehityksen periaattein toimiva elämystalo. Yrityksen liikevaihto tilikauden 2026 lopussa yli 3 M€. Yritys tarjoaa yli 80 %:lle työntekijöistään ympärivuotisen työpaikan.

## **Sustainability mission statement**

### **Sustainability is based on our values.**

For us, sustainability means caring for our unique environment, culture, and people. At the same time, sustainability is an important leading guideline in our services throughout the whole supply chain.

### **Arctic nature is a core of our services**

We are pleased to work in an Arctic environment. Destination Levi is our home, but we take our quests for an adventure to all of Lapland.

We have the cleanest air in the world, and we serve our guests in the Arctic region.

We feel a great responsibility in all our work we are committed to making as sustainable choices as possible while serving our guests.

### **Responsibility for the whole value chain**

People are the core of our business. We do not have customers, we have guests. We truly believe that we can increase the amount of love in the world one guest at a time. We take care of our staff, guests, and local people. Our goal is to create more year-round positions and we are engaged to recruit local people. Equality, responsibility, and a supportive way to lead and work are essential for us.

We are committed to promoting sustainability. We aim to follow, implement, and promote good sustainability practices to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts on tourism of our operations and to influence our clients and partners to do the same.

## Sustainability policy

Our sustainability policy is divided into 10 themes. Each theme consists of a set of principles and practical actions accordingly.

### 1. Sustainability Management & Legal Compliance

We commit to sustainability management, practiced by the following actions:

- To have an appointed employee who is responsible for sustainability coordinator tasks;
- To have a sustainability mission statement that is communicated to customers, partners and suppliers;
- To have an accessible and written sustainability policy that aims for a reduction of the negative social, cultural, economic, and environmental impacts of the company's activities; and includes employee-related health and safety aspects;
- To have a sustainability action plan with clear targets, actions, measures, responsibilities, and time planning;
- To ensure the company's transparency in sustainability by public reporting and communicating;
- To ensure that all staff are fully aware of our Sustainability Policy and are committed to implementing and improving it.

We commit to complying with all national legislation, regulations, and codes of practice.

### 2. Internal management: social policy & human rights

We commit to sustainable internal management by having a clear written and well-communicated social policy that includes the following principles:

- To grant employees the freedom of employment and contract termination
- To include labor conditions according to national labor law and a job description in the employment contract;
- The wage rate is to be mentioned in the contract and equals or above the national legal wage;
- To determine and compensate for overtime working hours based on the existing work time bank system;
- To provide medical and liability insurance according to the national law;
- To grant employees fixed paid yearly holiday and sick leave and unpaid annual leave allowance;

- To have a health and safety policy for employees which complies with national legal standards;
- To have first aid sets and trained staff are available at all relevant locations;
- To obey the national Minimum Age for Admission to Employment;
- To have documented effective procedures in place for employees to voice out their complaints and expectations;
- To provide periodic guidance and training for employees on roles, rights, and responsibilities regarding health and safety issues. This includes fire and relevant natural disasters;
- To create opportunities for students to participate in trainee- and internship;

We commit to practicing human rights by ensuring the enforcement of the following practices:

- To declare not to hinder trade union membership, collective labor negotiations, and representation of members by trade unions;
- To prohibit discrimination, regard 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;
- To ensure all employees have an equal chance and access to resources and opportunities for personal development through regular training;

### 3. Internal Management: Environment and community relations

We commit to practicing environmental protection and enhancing community relations by ensuring the enforcement of the following practices:

- Actively reduce the use of disposable and consumer goods;
- Favor the purchase of sustainable goods and services, office and catering supplies, giveaways and merchandise;
- Set copy and printing machines by default to double-sided printing or other forms of paper-saving modes;
- Use cleaning materials that are non-hazardous, non-eutrophic, and biodegradable and are certified with an eco-label, if locally available;
- Print brochures on environmentally friendly paper, with a printing company that works with a certified environmental management system, if locally available at reasonable costs;
- Implement measurements to reduce brochure wastage or an 'internet only' policy;
- Have an active commitment to measure, monitor, and reduce energy consumption;
- Calculate and compensate CO2 emissions and compare different periods;
- Purchase green energy and energy-efficient lighting for all areas, when available;

- Switch off Lights and equipment when not in use;
- Prefer low-energy equipment when buying new items, if available;
- Have an active policy to reduce water consumption, implemented and monitored on a monthly or yearly basis for benchmark purposes;
- Install water-saving equipment in toilets;
- Comply with the national legislation concerning waste disposal;
- Develop and implement a solid waste reduction and recycling policy, with quantitative goals;
- Separate all materials that can be recycled and organize the collection and proper disposal;
- Implement waste-reducing methods when using ink and toner cartridges for printing and copying, whenever feasible;
- Recycle or properly dispose of batteries;
- Measure and reduce staff-related travel and use more sustainable modes of transport. Calculate its emissions, to reduce and compensate, through a reliable locally available program;
- Reduce transport-related impacts by telework, tele/video meetings, work-at-home policies, or other means;
- Maintain and properly check motorized company vehicles, to reduce emissions and energy use and make sure they comply with the legal emission standards,
- Provide periodic guidance, training, and/or information to all staff members, about their roles and responsibilities concerning internal environmental practices;

#### 4. Partners

Based on an inventory of our key partners, we have developed and implemented a policy to improve the sustainability of our partners. We aim to make sustainable development concrete for each partner within our business.

We commit to this by;

- Keeping a list of the sustainability practices of our partners;
- Mainly working with organizations that are truly implementing sustainability in their tourism policy;
- Informing key partners on the Travelife and national tourism standards;
- Having a cooperation contract including an annex of the national code of conduct for local partners to encourage their practices towards sustainability;
- Evaluating the sustainability practices regularly of our key partners to ensure their practices are truly sustainable;
- Informing key partners about the travel companies' sustainability policy and that they are expected to comply with it and/or communicate it to final customers where relevant;
- Including key sustainability clauses in contracts with inbound/receptive partners;

- Motivating incoming/inbound partners to participate in sustainability training for travel companies;
- Having a written contract with partner agencies;
- Including clauses in the partner contracts that enable contract partners to end the contractual agreement prematurely if the partner company does not take adequate measures to prevent the sexual exploitation of children within the direct supply chain;
- Ensuring that partner companies comply with all relevant national laws protecting the rights of employees;

## 5. Transport

We try to ensure that vehicles used on tours and operations do not cause more than average pollution. We believe that transport is an important aspect of sustainable tourism, and we do our best to decrease the average pollution level.

We commit to this by;

- Selecting the most sustainable options considering price and comfort when selecting transport options to the destination;
- Considering and giving preference to more sustainable alternatives when selecting transport options for transfers and excursions in the destination, taking into account price, comfort, and practical considerations;

## 6. Accommodations

We try to achieve a tourism supply chain that is fully sustainable. The partner accommodations play an important role in achieving this and are stimulated and motivated to adopt sustainable practices.

We commit to this by;

- Selecting accommodations, if available, that comply with sustainability and quality standards with a special focus on the following items;
  - *Do they have a signed sustainability contract?*
  - *Do they have a water-saving program?*
  - *Do they have an energy-saving program?*
  - *Do they have a waste management program?*
  - *Do they have a sustainable supply chain?*
- Hotel partners have an ECO label/sustainability approval/certification like Green Key
- Motivating and encouraging partner accommodations to become sustainably certified;
- Selecting accommodations that employ local communities;
- Encouraging accommodations to follow best practices/pieces of training on responsible tourism;

- Giving clear preference to accommodations that work with internationally acknowledged (e.g. GSTC recognized) and/or Travelife certification;
- Including standard sustainability clauses in all contracts with accommodation providers that focus on child labor, anti-corruption, and bribery, waste management, and protection of biodiversity;
- Ensuring that through our accommodation supply chain, the rights of children are respected and safeguarded by;
  - Having a clause in contracts throughout the value chain stating a common repudiation and zero tolerance policy of sexual exploitation;
  - Having a clause dedicated to this aspect in their contract that enables the travel company to end the contractual agreement prematurely if the accommodation supplier does not take adequate measures to prevent sexual exploitation of children and adults;
- Terminating cooperation with accommodation in case of clear evidence that contracted accommodations jeopardize the provision of the integrity of basic services such as food, water, energy, healthcare, or soil to the neighboring companies.;

## 7. Excursions and activities

We value animal and community welfare extremely highly and aims at tours that only leave a minor footprint. We are safeguarding the authenticity of the communities and the natural environment, and are strongly against harming wildlife and polluting the environment.

We commit to this by;

- Advising guests on behavior standards during excursions and activities with a focus on respecting the local culture, nature, and environment;
- Communicating our sustainability objectives and requirements to contracted and other relevant excursion providers by distributing this information via code of conduct, representative agents, social media, email, discussions, and/or meetings, to minimize negative visitor impact and maximize enjoyment;
- Not offering any excursions that harm humans, animals, plants, or natural resources such as water and energy, or which are socially and culturally unacceptable;
- Not offering any excursions in which wildlife is held captive, except for properly regulated activities in compliance with local, national, and international law;
- Not being involved with companies that harvest, consume, display, sell, or trade wildlife species unless it is part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilization is sustainable and in compliance with local, national, and international law;
- Having skilled and/or certified guides to guide our guests in sensitive cultural sites, heritage sites, or ecologically sensitive destinations;



- Promoting and advising our guests on excursions and activities that directly involve and support local communities by purchasing services or goods, traditional crafts, and local (food) production methods, or visiting social projects;
- Promoting and advising our guests on excursions and activities which support the local environment and biodiversity such as visiting protected areas or environmental protection projects;

## 8. Tour leaders, local representatives and guides

We aim to involve as many locals as possible by employing them in the tourism business. We stand for a fair and safe working environment that supports and respects local communities.

We commit to this by;

- Ensuring that all employees have a written employment contract, including labor conditions and a job description, and fully understand the terms and conditions;
- Preferring 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;
- Ensuring that our local partners comply with all applicable international, national, and local laws and regulations, industry minimum standards, and any other relevant statutory requirements whichever requirements are more stringent;
- Paying tour leaders, local representatives, guides, porters, and other local staff contracted by us at least a living wage that is equal to or above the legal minimum or relevant industry standard;
- Ensuring that our tour guides, hosts, and other employees under contract are qualified and trained regularly;
- Ensuring that our local employees are informed on relevant aspects of our sustainability policy and comply with it, through newsletters, references, or supplements to contracts, emails, or training and information sessions;
- Offering a special *sustainable travel* module in the pieces of the training program for local tour guides and hosts, in which the main responsible tourism aspects are brought to attention followed by the role expected from the employees. This module will also include knowledge regarding the destination and its relevant sustainability aspects;
- Having our tour leaders, local representatives, and guides inform clients on relevant sustainability matters in the destination (e.g. protection of flora, fauna, and cultural heritage, resource use), social norms and values (e.g. tips, dressing code, and photography) and human rights (e.g. sexual exploitation);

- Training our employed tour leaders and local representatives on the avoidance of sexual exploitation of children. This will include training on how to check the requirements concerning the exclusion of child abuse;

## 9. Destination

We aim to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts at the destination to ensure the sustainable development of the places that we operate in.

We commit to this by:

- Consider sustainability aspects in the selection process of new destinations and possibly offer alternative, non-mainstream destinations;
- Not selecting destinations in which tourism leads to structural negative local effects;
- Support initiatives that improve the relationships between accommodations and local producers;
- Support biodiversity conservation, including protected areas and areas of high biodiversity, through financial contribution, political support, and integration in product offers;
- Not promote souvenirs that 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);

## 10. Customer communication and protection

Customers' welfare and information are very important to us. We ensure clear and constant communication and high protection to our clients.

Before booking, we commit to this by:

- Ensure that customer privacy is not compromised;
- Comply with relevant standards and voluntary codes of conduct in marketing and advertising messages, and do not promise more than is delivered;
- Provide destination information, including sustainability aspects, which is factually correct, balanced and complete;
- Inform the customer about sustainable alternatives concerning accommodations, excursions, package holidays, and transport options, if available;
- Inform (potential) direct customers, about sustainability commitments and actions;

After booking and during holidays, we commit to this by:

- Provide Information to consumers about the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage in the holiday destination;
- Inform consumers about key sustainability aspects and issues in the destination and receive recommendations on how to make a positive contribution;
- Inform customers about risks and precautions related to health and safety matters at the destination;
- Keep a contact person and a telephone number permanently available for emergencies;
- Train personnel and keep guidelines available, on how to deal with emergencies;
- Provide clients with documented guidelines and/or codes of conduct for sensitive excursions and activities, to minimize negative visitor impact and maximize enjoyment. When possible, guidelines are developed in collaboration with relevant NGO's and the affected community;
- Provide customers with information about commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation and harassment, particularly of children and adolescents;
- Inform clients about applicable legislation concerning the purchasing, sales, import, and export of historic or religious artifacts and articles containing materials of threatened flora and/or fauna in the destination;
- Motivate clients to use local restaurants and shops (where appropriate);
- Inform clients on sustainable transport options in destinations, when feasible;
- Encourage clients to donate to local charities and sustainable initiatives;

After the holidays, we commit to this by:

- Measure systematically client satisfaction and take into account the results, for service and product improvements; paper versions for the end customers, and face-to-face discussions with tour operators.
- Include sustainability as an integral part of the research into client satisfaction; under the development under the ongoing CRM development project.
- Have clear procedures in case of complaints from clients;