

Sustainability **Policy**

Rückenwind Reisen GmbH
Am Patentbusch 14 • 26125 OLDENBURG
GERMANY
☎ +49 441 485 97 0 • info@rueckenwind.de
www.rueckenwind.de/en

Sustainability Policy at Rückenwind Reisen

Table of Contents

A. Purpose and legal basis of the Directive 3

B. Internal Management 3

01. Sustainability Management and compliance with the law 3

02. Internal Management: Social policy and human rights 3

03. Internal Management: Environment und Community Relations 4

C. Requirements and measures relating to partners 6

01. Distribution partners 6

02. Accommodation 6

03. Transport 7

04. Local representatives and branches 7

05. Excursions and activities 8

D. Destinations 8

E. Customer communication and customer protection 9

A. Purpose and legal basis of the Directive

This policy sets out the principles, objectives and procedures through which we fulfil our responsibility to promote sustainable and safe cycle tourism. Our aim is to implement sustainable practices in order to enhance positive impacts and reduce the negative effects of our business activities, as well as to encourage guests and partners to act responsibly.

As a travel company that works with various stakeholders in the tourism sector, Rückenwind Reisen recognises the important role and influence it has on sustainable tourism and is therefore committed to promoting this development. These various stakeholders comprise consumers, field staff at destinations, travel agencies, accommodation providers and other service providers.

Company: Rückenwind Reisen GmbH, Am Patentbusch 14, 26125 OLDENBURG, Germany

Sustainability Co-ordinator: Phyllis Wiechmann

Involvement**:** All departments (management, customer service, sales, marketing, logistics, accounts, purchasing)

B. Internal Management

01. Sustainability Management and compliance with the law

We are committed to sustainable management, which is implemented through the following measures:

- We will appoint a person to be responsible for sustainability coordination tasks
- Our sustainability policy is publicly available on our company website. This policy is available to our guests, partners and suppliers.
- We have a written, documented and accessible sustainability policy which aims to minimise the negative social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of our business activities and to safeguard the health and safety of our staff.
- The basis for all further measures is a comprehensive baseline assessment of our business performance in relation to our sustainability practices
- Building on this, we draw up a catalogue of sustainability measures with clearly defined objectives, specific tasks, responsibilities and a timetable.
- To ensure implementation, we are developing procedures for the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our sustainability policies, objectives and targets.
- Transparent reporting and open communication with the public on sustainability issues are ensured.
- All staff members are fully informed about our sustainability policy and are encouraged to implement it and develop it further on an ongoing basis.
- We are also committed to complying with all relevant national laws, regulations and codes of conduct.

02. Internal Management: Social policy and human rights

We are committed to sustainable internal management and pursue a clear, written and transparently communicated social policy. This is based on the following principles:

- Employees are guaranteed the freedom to choose their employment and the right to terminate their contract in accordance with the notice period and without facing any discrimination.
- The terms and conditions of employment comply with national labour law and, together with the relevant job description, form part of the employment contract.
- Remuneration is at least equal to, or higher than, the statutory national minimum wage and is set out in the contract.
- Overtime is clearly defined and is compensated by time off in lieu in accordance with the applicable regulations.
- We provide health and third-party liability insurance in accordance with the applicable national legislation.
- Employees are entitled to paid annual leave and paid sick leave. Unpaid leave may also be granted.
- We have a health and safety policy for staff that complies with national legal standards.
- First-aid kits and appropriately trained staff are available at all relevant sites.
- National legal provisions regarding the minimum age for taking up employment are strictly adhered to.
- There are documented and effective procedures in place for staff to raise concerns, express expectations and make complaints in confidence.
- A clearly defined disciplinary procedure is in place and is communicated transparently to all staff members.
- We provide our staff with regular training and guidance on their duties, rights and obligations in the area of health and safety. These include, amongst other things, fire safety measures and how to deal with relevant natural disasters.
- In addition, we provide opportunities for students to gain valuable professional experience through work placements or training programmes.

We are committed to respecting and promoting human rights, and to this end we implement the following principles and practices:

- Membership of trade unions, the right to collective bargaining and the representation of workers' interests by trade unions are not restricted in any way.
- Where such structures exist locally, we participate in sector-wide collective bargaining arrangements relating to working conditions and comply with the agreements reached.
- Any form of discrimination in recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, pay, access to training, management positions or promotions on the grounds of gender, origin, age, disability, ethnicity, religion or belief, or sexual orientation is expressly prohibited.
- We ensure that all staff members have equal access to resources and are given equal opportunities for personal and professional development through regular training and further education programmes..

03. Internal Management: Environment und Community Relations

We are committed to protecting the environment and strengthening our ties with the local community. To this end, we are implementing the following measures:

- To minimise the environmental footprint of our office operations, we prioritise the use of public transport, operate largely paperlessly, sort our waste systematically and use certified recycled paper.
- Waste management: sorting, reducing, reusing and recycling to the best of our ability
    - We are consistently reducing our use of single-use and short-lived consumer goods.
    - Where possible, we source our products in larger quantities to minimise packaging material.
    - Our leaflets are printed on environmentally friendly paper and – where locally feasible on economically viable terms – produced by printing companies that operate a certified environmental management system.
    - We are taking targeted steps to reduce the use of single-use plastic bottles for drinking water in our offices.
    - When using ink and toner cartridges for printing and copying, we implement measures to prevent waste and promote recycling.
    - To minimise waste, we are taking specific measures to reduce the number of printed brochures and, where possible, are pursuing a consistent 'digital-first' strategy.
    - All recyclable materials are collected separately and sent for proper disposal or recycling.
    - Batteries are collected, recycled or disposed of in accordance with the relevant regulations.
- When purchasing goods and services – including office and catering supplies, promotional gifts and merchandising items – we give preference to sustainable and environmentally friendly products.
- Copiers and printers are set by default to double-sided printing or other paper-saving settings.
- We use cleaning products that are free from hazardous substances, do not cause eutrophication, are biodegradable and – where locally available – hold recognised environmental certifications.
- We are committed to systematically monitoring and continuously reducing our energy consumption.
- Our CO_2 emissions are calculated, offset, analysed and compared over various time periods in order to make progress measurable.
- We comply with all national regulations on wastewater treatment and ensure that wastewater is either reused or discharged in an environmentally sound manner.
- The use of substances that are harmful to the environment and human health is avoided as far as possible. Where necessary, these are replaced with safe alternatives. The storage, handling and disposal of chemicals are carried out in a controlled and proper manner.
- For interior and exterior painting, we prefer to use lead-free and water-based paints, provided they are available locally.
- We take appropriate measures to minimise the environmental impact of our office buildings within our sphere of influence.
- To reduce the environmental impact of transport, we encourage teleworking, video conferencing, home-working arrangements and other low-emission working models.
- Our company vehicles are regularly serviced and inspected to reduce emissions and energy consumption and to ensure compliance with statutory emission standards.
- Staff receive regular training, guidance and information on their duties and responsibilities in relation to internal environmental and sustainability practices.

- When planning, constructing, renovating or demolishing commercial buildings and infrastructure, we comply with all applicable regulations relating to land use, spatial planning and protected or listed areas.
- The planning, design and construction of new buildings, as well as renovation work, are based on sustainable building methods and materials appropriate to the local context.
- We actively contribute to the protection and preservation of significant historical, archaeological, cultural and spiritual sites, and ensure that access for the local population is not restricted.

C. Requirements and measures relating to partners

01. Distribution partners

Based on a systematic review of our key distribution partners, we have developed and implemented a policy aimed at specifically strengthening their sustainability performance. Our aim is to implement sustainable development in a concrete and effective manner in all our business relationships with our distribution partners.

- We have written contractual agreements in place with all our distribution partners. These contracts include a reference to this Sustainability Policy, which sets out our sustainability principles.
- We expect our sales partners to make every effort, to the best of their knowledge and belief, to implement and comply with our sustainability standards.
- Should there be clear indications or evidence that fundamental sustainability principles are being breached – for example, in the area of human rights or through serious environmental violations – we reserve the right to terminate our cooperation with the distribution partners concerned.

02. Accommodation

Our aim is to establish a tourism supply chain that is as sustainable as possible. Our partner accommodation providers play a key role in this. We actively encourage and support them in implementing sustainable practices. Our principles in this regard can be summarised as follows:

- We prefer accommodation that is locally owned and managed.
- When selecting our partners, we place particular emphasis on accommodation providers that employ local staff and thus contribute to the local economy.
- We also work primarily with accommodation providers that incorporate regional architecture, local art and cultural heritage into what they offer.
- Cooperation with accommodation providers will be terminated if there is clear evidence that their operations are compromising the availability or integrity of essential resources and services – such as food, water, energy, healthcare or land – for neighbouring businesses or the local population.
- Responsible waste management is a key priority for us. We therefore ensure that our partner accommodation providers implement efficient waste separation and transparent waste disposal schemes.
- We are actively committed to avoiding the use of single-use plastic, and we also encourage our partner accommodation providers to implement appropriate measures.

- Reducing energy consumption makes a significant contribution to cutting CO_2 emissions. We therefore place great importance on the use of energy-efficient appliances, both internally and at our accommodation facilities, as well as on the conscious and economical use of electricity.
- We encourage our guests to use water responsibly and to make use of refillable containers. We expect our partner accommodation providers to adhere to these principles in the same way.
- We do not enter into any business relationships, either directly or indirectly, with accommodation providers that are linked to forced labour or that employ children to carry out work normally performed by adults. Special working hours and conditions apply to children under the age of 14 who are employed, and these must comply with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Convention No. 138.
- Not every activity carried out by children is automatically classified as child labour. These include, for example, helping out with household chores, assisting in a family business, or earning an income outside school hours and during school holidays. However, child labour is defined as any form of work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally harmful, or that interferes with a child's education.
- In its most serious forms, child labour includes slavery, exposure to hazardous working conditions or diseases, and the use of children in armed conflicts.

03. Transport

We are committed to ensuring that the vehicles used on our tours do not cause above-average environmental impact. As transport is a key component of sustainable tourism, we are constantly striving to reduce emissions and our environmental impact.

- For international travel, we specifically prioritise sustainable transport options, particularly public transport, and actively inform our guests about environmentally friendly ways to travel here.
- When transporting luggage, we plan all journeys as efficiently as possible to avoid empty runs and unnecessary distances.
- When selecting modes of transport for necessary transfers and excursions at the destination, we give preference to sustainable alternatives, whilst continuing to take due account of factors such as cost-effectiveness, comfort and practicality.
- Our drivers are encouraged to adopt environmentally friendly driving practices, such as fuel-efficient driving and switching off the engine whilst loading and unloading.

04. Local representatives and branches

Our aim is to involve the local population as fully as possible in the tourism value chain, particularly by creating employment opportunities. In doing so, we are committed to ensuring a fair, safe and respectful working environment that strengthens and supports local communities..

- We ensure that all staff members have a written employment contract setting out their terms and conditions of employment and a clear job description, and that they fully understand its contents.
- Whenever possible, we give preference to working with local representatives, drivers and other staff from the region, provided their qualifications and skills meet the requirements. Where necessary, we offer targeted training to help develop their skills.

- We ensure that our local partners comply with all applicable international, national and local laws and regulations, industry-standard minimum requirements and all other relevant legal requirements – the stricter of the two standards always applies.
- Our local representatives and partner organisations ensure compliance with all relevant national labour law provisions designed to protect the rights of employees.
- Local staff, such as baggage handlers, station managers and other staff at branch offices, shall receive at least the statutory minimum wage or – where higher – the relevant industry standard as a living wage.
- We ensure that luggage handlers, branch managers and other branch staff have the necessary qualifications and receive regular training.
- Our local staff are kept informed of the relevant aspects of our sustainability policy through targeted training and written information, such as via email, and are encouraged to comply with it.
- Branch managers and other staff at our outposts provide our guests with on-site information about key sustainability issues at their destination, such as the protection of nature, wildlife and cultural heritage, as well as the responsible use of resources.

05. Excursions and activities

We place great importance on the welfare of animals and local communities, and focus on excursions and activities that leave as small an environmental and social footprint as possible. In doing so, we take care to preserve the authenticity of the communities and the natural environment, and we expressly reject environmental pollution and any form of harm to wildlife.

- Our packages do not include any excursions or activities that harm people, animals, plants or natural resources such as water and energy, or that are socially or culturally unacceptable.
- Furthermore, we do not offer any activities in which animals are kept in captivity or exploited for tourism purposes.
- We do not enter into business relationships with companies that hunt, consume, display, sell or trade in wild animals, unless these activities are strictly regulated and demonstrably sustainable, and comply with local, national and international legal requirements.
- At the same time, we encourage excursions and activities that actively contribute to the protection of the environment and biodiversity. These include, for example, visits to protected areas or support for environmental and nature conservation projects.

D. Destinations

Our aim is to specifically enhance the positive effects of tourism and minimise any potential negative impacts at the destination, in order to promote the long-term sustainable development of the destinations in which we operate.

- We do not include destinations in our range where tourism has been shown to have structurally negative impacts on the local population or the environment, unless our involvement clearly contributes to offsetting or improving these effects.
- When developing new travel destinations, we give priority to those that are easily accessible by more environmentally friendly modes of transport, particularly public transport.

- We consistently comply with all statutory requirements regarding the use of space and land, as well as all regulations concerning protected areas and the protection of historic monuments and cultural heritage.
- Furthermore, we do not promote souvenirs made from endangered plant or animal species – as listed in the CITES Convention or on the IUCN Red List – or containing historical or archaeological artefacts, unless this is expressly permitted by law.

E. Customer communication and customer protection

The well-being and comprehensive information of our guests are our top priority. Rückenwind Reisen ensures transparent and ongoing communication, as well as a high level of protection for our guests' interests..

Before booking

- Our travel specialists follow clearly defined guidelines when advising customers to ensure that the advice they provide is expert, reliable and tailored to their needs.
- The privacy of our guests is guaranteed at all times and complies with the applicable data protection regulations.
- We comply with all relevant legal requirements as well as voluntary industry standards and codes of conduct in our marketing and advertising activities, and only make promises that are realistic and achievable.
- All product and pricing information relating to our company and the products and services we offer – including details on sustainability – is communicated clearly, fully and accurately.
- In addition, we provide our guests with comprehensive information on destinations and travel, which also takes sustainability into account and is presented in a factually accurate, balanced and transparent manner.
- We provide our guests with clear information about the various ways to travel to their destination, provided these are not included in the holiday package. Where available, we specifically highlight sustainable transport alternatives.
- We provide potential customers with clear and accessible information about our sustainability commitments and the measures we have put in place.

Between booking and the trip

- Our guests receive comprehensive information on relevant sustainability issues at their destination, as well as specific recommendations on how they can make a positive contribution whilst there.
- In addition, we provide information on potential health and safety risks at the destination, as well as on the relevant precautions.
- Throughout the trip, our guests have a designated point of contact and an emergency telephone number at their disposal.
- Our staff are trained to deal with emergency situations and have access to all the necessary guidelines and procedures.
- We encourage our guests – where appropriate – to support local restaurants, shops and service providers, thereby contributing to regional economic growth.
- We also provide information on sustainable transport options at your destination, such as public transport or environmentally friendly alternatives.

After the trip

- We regularly survey and analyse our guests' satisfaction and use the results specifically to further develop our products and services.
- Sustainability is an integral part of our customer satisfaction surveys.
- We have clearly defined and transparent procedures in place for dealing with feedback and complaints.