

Name of Company:

Swiss Family Treks & Expedition

and

Swiss Himalayan Family Treks &
Expedition Pvt. Ltd

Sustainable Accommodation Policy

Date of approval: 11th June 2017

Our company is committed to promoting sustainable accommodation.

Sustainability of an accommodation establishment is of key importance, as it enables our company to extend sustainability practice throughout a core element in our tours / supply chain. In some cases we do not select the accommodation for our clients. In such case, it is our policy to recommend our clients the most sustainable accommodation options within their budget range. When we do have a chance to select the accommodation, we will give strong preference to establishments that follow sustainable practices throughout all aspects of their operation.

Scope

This policy will be part of the Sustainability Policy. The policy is applicable to the selection of accommodation suppliers that our company collaborates with.

This policy is effective immediately after approval by Managing Director and circulation to staff. The policy will be formally reviewed every 2 years to ensure its relevancy. The Managing Director or an officer delegated with such authority must approve any deviations to this policy.

Sustainable Accommodation Principles

In our effort of selecting the most sustainable accommodation providers available, we prefer establishments who follow these core principles:

1. The right comfort for the right price

The establishment is hygienic, sanitary and safe and is able to offer a good comfort and service to the expectation of our clients. Sustainable accommodation practices can be found in all price ranges; hence we aim to identify the most sustainable options available within the budget of our clients.

2. Fair business

The establishment follows fair business practices, including transparency and adherence to law, human rights and economic/social equity, and environmental and animal protection.

3. Minimizes impact on the environment and society

The establishment places high priority on sustainable practices, aiming at minimizing its effect on the surrounding environment and society.

General Sustainability Considerations

Internationally certified accommodation currently does not exist in Nepal, however there are establishments that are known for their good practices. Sustainable practices can be found in all budget ranges. Hence our company mainly looks at their practices to identify the more responsible suppliers.

Evaluations of the accommodation by our company can be made in several ways:

- Site visit by our company's sustainability coordinator / manager
- Observations from our guide
- Client feedback form

The following considerations will be made in the evaluation of accommodation establishments and will inform our company preference:

Human care

We aim to work with establishments with sound care for their human resources, which is of key importance to the hospitality sector. Hence, we assess if the establishment provides good labor conditions for their staff (minimum wage, reasonable working times, proper lunch hours, etc.).

No plastic policy

The accommodation minimizes the use of plastic and as a common practice does not offer plastic water bottles to its guests. Instead the establishment makes available places where guests can re-fill jugs that are provided in the room and their own bottles.

Waste management

We verify that the accommodation separates at least organic waste for composting and plastic for recycling. Establishments that are able to go beyond these basic waste management practices will be highly preferred.

Energy efficiency

The establishment follows energy efficiency practices, such as energy saving light bulbs, and energy efficient equipment. The accommodation provider advises their guests (e.g. through signs in the rooms and hallways) to switch off lights and electric appliances when not in use or has put in place an overall switch off plan (automated system).

Towels are only change if clients leaves them on the floor.

Water efficiency

The accommodation efficiently uses water. Places with a water saving system on their 'western' toilet and shower will be preferred over other. Places that make use of a bucket flush for the toilet and/or bucket shower also have a clear control over the amount used.

Child protection

The establishment ensures that the rights of children are respected and safeguarded. If the supplier employs children below the age of 14, the business should ensure that there are special working conditions put in place to safeguard them (for example part-time or on internship basis).

Local supplies

Accommodations are stimulated to purchase and use local food products, which are produced based on fair trade and sustainability principles.

Biodiversity care

The accommodation limits their negative effect on local and global biodiversity wherever feasible (e.g. do not offer red listed species on the menu).

Authentic charm

The accommodation building (exterior and/or interior) incorporates elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage.

Community value

The establishment respects the intellectual property rights of local communities and contributes to the local community in whichever way they can (e.g. sponsoring of local events, donation to local heritage sites).

Stimulating enhanced sustainable practice

Our company follows a long-term strategy to improve the sustainability of regular accommodation suppliers. Upon request or self-initiative, we support collaborative initiatives with other tour operators and/or stakeholders to promote sustainability among accommodations in our destinations.

When possible, we talk to the accommodation owner / manager about their current practices and what they could do to follow more sustainable practices (e.g. by visit from our manager or through our guides).

In addition, we may share best practice standards and guidance to our accommodation suppliers, including:

- Information about hotel certification, such as Travelife for Hotels
- Self-evaluation tools
- Training manuals

Sanctions

If it is revealed that an accommodation supplier acts on unsustainable practices, our company will give them a warning. If that supplier does not amend its practice, our company will end any form of collaboration (informal and contractual) and will blacklist that company from any further association.

Communication to accommodation providers

Our company communicates with accommodation establishments in various ways.

Email

Our most common communication is via email and phone. Particularly when sending emails, we are able to communicate on some sustainability aspects.

Voucher

Once our booking is made, we supply the accommodation suppliers with a voucher to claim their payment. With our regular suppliers we have agreed to send this voucher via email, to avoid paper waste. However, there remain some suppliers in Nepal that prefer a paper proof.

Contract

We sign contracts with accommodation suppliers that we work with on a regular basis and with sufficient volume of clients. These contracts include an overview of our codes of conduct and sanctions, which the suppliers read and sign upon agreement.

In-person visit

When we have the opportunity, we visit the accommodation in person and talk to them about how they could improve on their services and become more sustainable. In many instances it is our guides who deliver these messages.

What we communicate

Our company promotes as a mandatory policy:

- Child labour
- Anti-corruption / bribery
- Waste management
- Protection of biodiversity

Incentives

Our company will give preference to working with those accommodation establishments who are able to operate in a sustainable manner, taking responsibility for their impact on environment and society. Where we have enough volume, we may offer additional benefits, such as marketing of the hotel on our website or special contract conditions.