



Explore Romania

Explore Romania Tour Operator

Sc Explore Travel Srl
Filioara, Neamt, Romania
VAT Number: RO15727857

www.exploreromania.org

office@exploreromania.org
+40 748 155 400
+40 740 211 535

Sustainability Policy

We are committed to run our business in a sustainable and ethical manner. Offering authentic experiences to our clients is of vital importance for us, and this can only be done with great care for the environment and the local communities.

This policy applies to all our employees and contracted guides. We are also committed to raise awareness of sustainability issues with all our stakeholders: accommodation, transport, clients and other travel agencies that are our partners.

Sustainability management & legal compliance

Sustainability commitment

Explore Romania is wholly committed to the company's sustainability performance and endorses the company's sustainability mission statement and policy.

Sustainability management & legal compliance

Explore Romania commits to continuous improvement of sustainability practices, including the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our sustainability policy, with dedicated personnel and resources to achieve our sustainability goals.

We follow all local, regional, national, and international regulations as they relate to human resources, human rights, children's rights, land rights, environmental management, wildlife, and land use. We follow a strict Code of Ethics, including a zero-tolerance policy for corruption, bribery, forced labor, and discrimination.

Employees

We recognize that our employees are our biggest asset for delivering meaningful travel experiences to our customers. Therefore, we maintain a clear human resource policy to ensure: legal compliance in all regards; a safe, healthy, and welcoming workplace; fair contract conditions including fair compensation; training opportunities including trainings on topics of sustainability, sexual harassment and exploitation in the workplace and in the industry; participation in the sustainability planning activities; inclusion and equal opportunity for all employees, particularly with regard to compensation, promotion, distribution of benefits, and professional development opportunities.

Environmental management of office operations

We are committed to managing environmental impact as an integral part of our operations. It is our policy to assure the environmental integrity of our processes and products at all times by: continuously seeking opportunities to improve our environmental performance by establishing objectives and targets, measuring progress, and reporting our results, including but not limited to energy, water, paper and carbon; practicing a waste hierarchical approach to always reduce, reuse, and recycle commodities and products instead of waste, particularly waste to landfill; promoting environmental responsibility amongst our employees and stakeholders and soliciting input from them to better achieve our environmental goals; minimizing pollution including light, noise, and any soil, water, or air contaminants, and avoiding use of any toxic or hazardous substances.



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Carbon management of office operations

We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint and endeavors to reduce the amount we travel as much as possible by: monitoring and measuring carbon footprint with the aim to reduce as much as possible and offset remaining amounts; encouraging remote work whenever possible, and when it is not possible, making it easier for employees to limit their carbon footprint by use of eco modes of transportation; implementing procedures such as following proper maintenance for vehicle fleet, encouraging the use of public transport by our staff; installing energy efficient equipment and appliances where appropriate/possible.

Land use

Explore Romania offices are located in urban and rural areas and abide by all local land use laws, respects local cultural and natural resources in our business operations, and favors sustainable architecture and design.

General suppliers' policy

We are committed to sourcing our products and services responsibly, avoiding harmful impacts on society, culture and nature as much as possible. We expect the same level of engagement and commitment from our suppliers.

We prefer to work with partners that share our commitment towards sustainability. This means that we prefer, when available and when suitable to our products, partners that have a written sustainability statement as an integral part of their business policy and/or a clear sustainability policy in place.

We prefer to work with suppliers in the destinations that are locally owned or managed, use local and seasonal products and services and benefit the local community by hiring locally and equitably and by providing fair working conditions.

We expect that our suppliers adhere to our code of conduct, that includes the following responsible business practices: complying with all local, regional, national and international regulations; respecting all human rights including labor rights, children's rights, and women's rights; committing to fair employment conditions; following anti-corruption, anti-bribery, anti-extortion, and anti-discrimination policies; protecting children from (sexual) exploitation through tourism; protecting the environment and natural resources; acting in the best interest of local communities

Following a zero-tolerance policy, we will immediately terminate any relationships with suppliers that violate the above code of conduct, specifically through acts of bribery, corruption, discrimination, and violation of human rights.

We are raising awareness amongst our suppliers to adopt sound social and environmental practices, and to minimize their carbon footprint.

We actively collaborate with suppliers to improve their sustainability performance. We encourage our suppliers to continuously learn about sustainability and provide/support this learning whenever possible.

We maintain open lines of communication with our suppliers and partners and encourage feedback from our stakeholders at any time and on any topic, particularly sustainability.

Inbound partner agencies

We work with partner agencies that share our values.



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In the entire process of developing and operating our travel packages, we expect partner agencies to act in the best interests of the surrounding communities and environment as well as our guests.

Transport

We work with transport providers that share our values and run their activity according to legal requirements.

When selecting transport for guests and business-related travel, we commit to choosing the most environmentally friendly options available for travelling to, from, and within the destination – taking into consideration distance, price, route, and comfort.

We aim reducing GHG emissions from transport and we select the most environmentally friendly transport options, by: preferring ground transport over air transport for short-haul travel destinations; avoiding in-destination flights as much as possible; offering rail-and-fly transport options to and from the airport; using public transportation options in the destinations, when possible; using appropriate vehicle sizes for group sizes and purchasing most efficient vehicles available.

Accommodations

We work mainly with accommodations that adhere to our values and conduct.

In the accommodation selection process, we consider the sustainability practices of an accommodation by taking into account their sustainability management and social and environmental footprint

We favour the selection of accommodations that respect and protect land use, as well as respectfully highlight elements of local architecture, customs and traditions; and the selection of accommodations that are locally own, whenever these options are available

Activities & Excursions

We only work with excursion providers that adhere to our values.

All excursions and activities run by or on our behalf respect local customs, traditions, cultural integrity, and natural resources.

We commit to not offering any excursions that harm humans, wildlife, environment, or natural resources such as water and energy.

We give preference to excursions and activities that benefit local communities, respect animal welfare and support environmental protection.

We have clear guidelines in place for environmentally and culturally sensitive excursions offered by or on our behalf. These guidelines are actively communicated to guests as well as distributed and implemented by excursion providers and guides.

We give excursion and attraction providers opportunities for sustainability learning and management, including free access to the Travelife online learning and reporting platform.

Tour leaders, local representatives, and guides

We commit to hiring qualified local guides, drivers or other local staff, paying them living wages and providing safe and fair working conditions. We expect the same from our suppliers that are hiring local staff on our behalf.

We understand that guides are the intermediaries between the guests and the socio-cultural and environmental context of the destination, conveying the appropriate behaviour to them. We provide



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guides with learning opportunities on sustainability topics including providing free access to the Travelife online learning platform.

Destinations

Sustainable destinations

We prefer to work in destinations that have committed to sustainability as an integral part of community and destination development, such as the certified Eco-tourism destinations and the natural and national parks

We aim to send visitors to secondary or lesser-known tourist areas to avoid over-tourism, whenever possible.

We do not support destinations that have a questionable human rights track record.

Contribution to local communities / local economic network

We commit to positive contribution to the destinations in which we operate, by: sourcing locally and responsibly, and supporting local and traditional arts and culture; encouraging guests to shop responsibly and educating them about illegal/prohibited/forbidden souvenirs; collaborating with other local tourism stakeholders [including local government, other tourism businesses, academia, community groups] to further the sustainable tourism development of the destination; respecting and advocating for all human rights (i.e. children's rights, women's rights, labour rights, etc.) as well as land rights.

Environmental stewardship in destinations

We commit to environmental stewardship in the destinations in which we operate by: ensuring natural resources remain intact; educating guests about the principles of responsible travel and responsible visitor behaviour.

Customer communication and protection

Privacy

Our customer protection is our priority. Therefore, we act to ensure: legal compliance in all regards; customers and their data are protected; customers know how their information is being use.

Marketing and communication

We strive to be truthful in all situations and at all times. We offer products and services that do what we claim in our communications.

We honour our explicit and implicit commitments and promises.

We are anti-greenwashing and stand behind our sustainability claims 100%.

We endeavour to be inclusive and representative in our marketing, and to always take into account cultural, religious, and ethnic sensitivities.

Sustainability communication

Customers are informed about the social and environmental impact of their journey, and are educated about the sustainable choices they can make, including transparent communication on: activities and excursions that benefit the local communities and environmental protection; responsible shopping and illegal souvenirs.



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Customer experience

The company aims for all customer experiences to be positive, and follows strict legal requirements/policies related to health and safety, marketing, and excursion policies to ensure customer satisfaction. These policies cover specific topics of (but not limited to): health and safety; emergency procedures; privacy; group numbers; transport; shopping; sexual exploitation; children in tourism; satisfaction and complaints;

We maintain open lines of communication with our customers and encourage feedback at any time and on any topic, particularly sustainability.

Contact / Responsible person

All staff are responsible for the ownership and undertaking of this policy.

All staff are responsible for the promotion and implementation of this sustainability policy within their departments.

The implementation of this policy will be led by the Sustainability Coordinator, Maria Andrunache, who can be reached at maria@exploreromania.org

Effective date

This policy is effective from May 15th, 2023.