Hutland TOURS

Hutland Tours Sustainability Policy

This Sustainability Policy is effective from May 01st 2025 and is scheduled to be reviewed on a two year basis.

The appointed Sustainability Coordinator is responsible for the implementation, assigning of tasks and review of the policy.

Current assigned sustainability coordinator:

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Introduction

The tourism industry is a powerful force in the global economy, and its reach and influence continue to grow. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the global tourism industry accounts for 10% of global GDP and provides employment for 10% of the world's workforce. In 2019 alone, international tourism generated over USD 1.7 trillion in export earnings, and the sector is expected to continue expanding in the coming decades. As such, the decisions we make in the tourism industry have the potential to drive significant change—not only in the economy but also in terms of environmental and social impacts.

At Hutland Tours, we recognize the transformative power of tourism in shaping the world around us. As a tour company based in Uganda, where wildlife, local cultures, and natural landscapes form the heart of our portfolio, we have an intrinsic responsibility to ensure that our activities support, rather than harm, the environment and the communities we engage with.

With the understanding that tourism done irresponsibly, can have far-reaching negative impacts on the environment and people of visited areas, we are committed to integrate sustainable business practices into all aspects of our operations. This Sustainability Policy reflects our dedication to minimizing our ecological footprint, while maximizing the positive impact we have on local communities and the economy.

As ambassadors for responsible tourism, we understand our role in shaping a future where tourism is a force for good. This policy represents our commitment to a balanced, sustainable approach that respects the environment, supports local communities, and enhances the overall travel experience. We are proud to lead by example, offering our guests an opportunity to explore Uganda in a way that benefits both the destination and the world as a whole.

Mission Statement

At Hutland Tours, our mission is to provide unforgettable journeys, where our guests experience the breathtaking beauty and diverse cultures of East Africa. We are dedicated to promoting tourism that is responsible for the environment and empowers local communities. In every aspect of our operations, we aim to reduce our ecological footprint, safeguard wildlife, and prioritize social responsibility. Hutland Tours aims to inspire conscious travel that leaves a positive and lasting impact on both people and the planet.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to be a leader in sustainable tourism in Uganda, setting a standard for responsible travel that prioritizes environmental conservation and community empowerment. We aspire to inspire both travelers and the tourism sector to adopt eco-friendly practices, ensuring that natural wonders and cultural heritage are preserved for future generations. Through our commitment to purposeful travel, we aim to influence the entire tourism industry, fostering a model where local communities thrive and the environment is protected.

Commitment

Hutland Tours leadership is wholly committed to the company's sustainability performance and endorses the company's sustainability mission statement and policy. Dedicated personal and sufficient resources shall be provided in order to achieve the company's sustainability goals.

Sustainability Progress

Hutland Tours commits to continuous improvement of all sustainability efforts. Monitoring and evaluation processes are specified to observe the progress throughout all aspects. A sustainability performance report will be publicly shared every two years.

Legal Compliance

Hutland Tours is fully registered under the law of Uganda. The company follows national and international regulations as they relate to environmental protection, wildlife protection, human rights and safeguarding of children.

Internal Management

We recognize that our sustainability efforts are not limited to our product range, but include all business aspects.

Human Resources
In order to provide an amicable and productive working environment, Hutland Tours maintains a clear human resource policy, that assures:

We fully comply with all national laws and regulations in every aspect of our operations, ensuring that we meet legal requirements and maintain ethical standards across all areas of our business.

- We provide all employees with a written contract outlining fair terms and conditions of employment, ensuring transparency and mutual understanding from the outset of the employment relationship.
- We are committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and inclusive workplace that fosters well-being and creates a positive and welcoming environment for all employees. In the event of accidents or other incidents, we ensure that appropriate investigations are carried out promptly and that corrective measures are taken to prevent recurrence and continuously improve workplace safety.
- We ensure that all employees receive fair salary, guaranteeing a living wage that meets or exceeds the national standard and supports their financial well-being.
- Our company is committed to fair labor practices, including appropriate compensation for overtime work. Unless otherwise agreed, overtime is compensated with time off in lieu.
- To reduce the environmental impact of transportation, we implement a hybrid work model, allowing employees to work from home three days per week. This arrangement provides flexibility while ensuring that work is completed efficiently and on time.
- We provide a minimum of 20 vacation days per year for every employee, recognizing the importance of work-life balance and the need for regular rest and relaxation.

- Employees are entitled to up to 14 days of paid sick leave per calendar year. Sick leave may be used in the event of illness or injury that prevents an employee from performing their duties. To maintain accountability, a medical certificate is required for any absence exceeding two consecutive days. Employees should notify their supervisor as soon as possible when taking sick leave and submit any necessary documentation promptly upon return.

- We are committed to providing equal opportunities and equitable compensation for all employees, ensuring fairness and diversity in every aspect of employment, including hiring, promotions, and benefits.

- Every full-time employee is entitled to one paid professional development opportunity per year, such as training relevant to their role, to enhance their skills and career growth.

- All employees are trained in sustainable business practices and are actively included in the company's efforts to operate in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

- We provide an anonymous feedback box for all employees, allowing them to voice their concerns or suggestions and ensuring that their well-being and satisfaction are continuously prioritized.

- We have a strict policy against child labor and do not tolerate any form of exploitation in our operations or within our supply chain. All employees and partners must adhere to this policy, ensuring ethical practices are maintained at all times.

- Hutland Tours respects and upholds the right of all employees to freely associate and join trade unions or other representative organizations of their choice. We affirm that we do not, in any way, hinder or discourage trade union membership or activity.

Environmental management

Hutland Tours is committed to minimize the direct environmental footprint as much as possible and therefore follows a strict environmental policy. As such, the company commits to:

- We are committed to adhering to all national laws and regulations related to environmental protection. This ensures that our operations align with legal standards and contribute positively to the protection of the environment.

- We measure, monitor, and evaluate the usage of commodities and products with significant environmental impact, such as water, electricity, paper, and other essential resources. This allows us to identify areas for improvement and implement more sustainable practices across the organization.

- All employees are encouraged to reduce their consumption of water and electricity. Energy-saving measures, such as the use of energy-efficient light bulbs, are implemented throughout the office to promote resource conservation. Reminders to switch off light, fans and water when not in use, are fixed around the office.

- When procuring office supplies, we prioritize locally produced, fair trade, sustainability-certified, and seasonal items. Additionally, we favor products with environmentally friendly or minimal packaging to reduce our ecological footprint.

- When procuring energy-consuming products, we prioritize those with low energy usage. If price or quality considerations take precedence, the justification must be clearly documented.

- All employees receive training on the principles of a circular economy and are actively encouraged to minimize waste. We measure, monitor, and evaluate the waste generated in the office to track our progress and continuously improve our waste management practices.

- We provide clearly marked waste separation bins throughout the office and ensure all employees are educated on proper waste disposal practices. A composting system is available on-site for natural waste, which is excluded from the waste evaluation, although proper maintenance and handling are essential at all times.

- A contractual partner for waste maintenance is appointed through our procurement process. Despite the limited availability of companies offering comprehensive recycling and waste management services, leadership ensures the necessary funds are available to support sustainable waste management practices.

- Once a year, we celebrate our collective efforts in reducing waste, electricity, and water consumption. If we fail to meet the set goals, all employees and leadership commit to participating in a community clean-up activity instead of the celebration, reinforcing our collective responsibility toward environmental sustainability.

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General Suppliers

Hutland Tours is committed to sourcing its 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 and therefore favor suppliers with a formal sustainability commitment, certified companies and companies with proven positive impact.

Understanding the responsibility and special position of tour companies in the tourism sector, Hutland Tours is using its connection and influence to other stakeholders to teach and inspire them in their own sustainability aspirations. Being the connection point in between supplier and traveler, we commit to sharing specific and realistic sustainability expectations and needs of the clients to suppliers, in order to motivate improvement with best economic benefit.

Hutland Tours follows a zero tolerance policy in respect to bribery, corruption, discrimination and abuse of minorities, such as children, women and elderly. In case of any violation of this Code of Ethics, Hutland Tours will immediately terminate any relationship with the supplier.

Transport

In the nature of our business, there is a high and mostly unavoidable negative impact through transportation. Hutland Tours is explicitly aware of this factor and tries to minimize the harm through the following measurements:

- While most of our clients arrive at their destination via long-haul flights, we understand the environmental impact of air travel. Although clients book their own flights, we are committed to providing guidance on how to select the most sustainable flight options, helping them make informed choices to reduce their carbon footprint.

- To minimize carbon emissions within the destination, Hutland Tours designs itineraries that prioritize longer stays at individual lodges, where possible. We also promote alternative travel methods, such as hiking and cycling tours, to encourage more sustainable ways of exploring the area.

- All of our drivers are trained in eco-driving techniques to reduce fuel consumption and lower the environmental impact of transportation. By adopting these practices, we aim to minimize the carbon footprint of each journey.

- We do not offer domestic flights as part of our tours, except in cases where clients specifically request them. In such instances, we ensure clients are fully informed about the environmental consequences of domestic air travel and its extended impact.

- Hutland Tours offers a carbon offsetting program that allows clients to mitigate the environmental impact of their travel. The program supports a variety of conservation and social projects, from which clients can choose. This option is actively promoted and communicated to every client, encouraging them to make a positive contribution to sustainability.

- We are committed to continuously researching and investing in more sustainable transport options. Our goal is to reduce the environmental impact of our tours and offer more eco-friendly alternatives to our clients whenever possible.

Accommodation

An internal auditing system of accommodation providers is in place while formal sustainability management and certification is not yet widely spread among the region of our operation. Accommodation providers with higher efforts will be preferred in the selection process and exceptional providers will be promoted on our website and social media platforms.

The internal auditing system will screen aspects, such as:

- We require that all our partners adhere to our comprehensive Code of Ethics, which places a particular emphasis on human rights. This includes ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness, regardless of race, gender, nationality, or background. We are committed to preventing any form of discrimination, exploitation, or abuse, and we actively promote ethical practices throughout our operations. This commitment extends to our human rights policy, which ensures fair treatment for all employees, contractors, and local communities we engage with.

- We prioritize accommodation providers with sustainable purchasing management. Products and services should be sourced locally whenever possible to support the local economy and reduce the environmental impact.

- Effective waste management is a cornerstone of our sustainability efforts. We are committed to reducing, reusing, and recycling waste wherever possible and expect the same effort from our accommodation partners. A particular emphasis is placed on food waste, as it is a significant global sustainability issue.

- We recognize the importance of conserving natural resources, particularly water and electricity. The operations of our accommodation partners should aim to reduce resource consumption by implementing energy-efficient systems and water-saving technologies. For instance, where electricity is necessary, we prioritize renewable energy sources and ensure that energy use is minimized across all operations. In areas where generators are used, fuel-efficiency and maintenance should be ensured to reduce unnecessary emissions and minimize noise pollution.

- We are committed to eliminating single-use plastics from our operations wherever possible and encourage our partners to switch to reusable alternatives, such as bottles, bags, and packaging, and consider more eco-friendly solutions. If single use plastics cannot be avoided, an effort should be made for proper disposal and if possible, recycling or repurposing. However, we acknowledge that sufficient country wide solutions for proper disposal are not yet provided.

- Accommodation providers should take a proactive approach to prevent all forms of pollution, including air, water, noise, and light pollution. The environmental footprint should be minimized as much as possible to avoid harm to local wildlife or communities.

- The protection of natural ecosystems and wildlife is at the heart of our operations. We therefore prioritize accommodation providers, who are committed to supporting conservation efforts and adopting sustainable practices that contribute to the preservation of biodiversity.

- We favor accommodation providers with the aim to make a positive impact on the local communities we engage with by supporting local businesses, promoting cultural heritage, and contributing to community development projects. The communities around the accommodation should benefit directly from tourism, creating economic opportunities and empowering local people.

Hutland Tours is committed to supporting the education and training of our accommodation partners on the importance of the above aspects, with the aim of driving a collective transformation toward a sustainable tourism industry and inspiring others to follow suit.

Activities and Excursions

As a company offering cultural activities, wildlife viewing, and impactful experiences, we recognize our responsibility to approach these sensitive areas with respect and care. At Hutland Tours, we do not view them merely as products, but instead appreciate the intrinsic value of nature, wildlife, traditions, and culture. We are committed to protecting these treasures under all circumstances.

All excursions and activities run by or on behalf of Hutland Tours follow the following guidelines:

- Our providers are expected to fully comply with our Code of Conduct, which outlines our ethical standards, including respect for human rights, environmental responsibility, and fair treatment of all individuals.

- We require our providers to demonstrate a deep respect for the local customs, traditions, and cultural values of the communities they interact with. This includes honoring cultural practices, language, and traditions, while ensuring that tourism activities promote understanding and positive cultural exchange without disrupting or exploiting local ways of life.

- We are committed to offering only excursions and activities that do not harm humans, wildlife, or the environment. This includes ensuring that all activities adhere to local laws and conservation guidelines, and promoting sustainable practices that protect both the natural landscape and the well-being of the local population.

- We prioritize partnering with providers who have a formal sustainability management system or a proven track record of making a positive impact on the environment, local communities, or wildlife conservation. Providers who actively contribute to conservation, ethical labor practices, and sustainable resource management are given preference, ensuring that our tours support businesses that are genuinely committed to long-term sustainability.

- We believe that a collective effort is essential for the sustainable transformation of the tourism industry. As such, we actively work with our providers by offering advice, resources, and best practices to help them improve their sustainability efforts.

- We are committed to actively communicating clear guidelines of behavior, cultural sensitivity, and environmental regulations to our clients. Before and during excursions, we ensure our guests are informed about the local customs, proper conduct, and the importance of minimizing their impact on nature. This includes educating them on responsible travel practices.

Wildlife and animal welfare

Wildlife is an essential part of our portfolio and we fully commit to treat it with care and respect. Hutland Tours follows the regulations provided by the Uganda Wildlife Authority for visits of protected areas and especially the viewing of endangered species. Additionally, we follow the guidelines provided by the Association of British Travel Agents, which include the following, summarized points:

Unacceptable practices are:

- Performances or tourist interactions involving wild animals where training involves punishment or food deprivation, causes the animal fear, injury or distress, or the tasks are not based on normal behaviour.
- Tourist contact, feeding of and “walking with” wild cats.
- Tourist contact or feeding of great apes (chimpanzees, gorillas).
- Any tourist holding of, or photo opportunity with, wild animals where the animal does not have the choice of terminating the interaction or moving away.
- Ritual animal slaughter as part of the tourism experience.
- Animals used for begging.
- Unregulated animal and plant collection from the wild.
- Human-initiated contact with and feeding of animals in the wild.
- Trade and sale of endangered wildlife products.
- Trophy hunting.

Basic animal welfare:

- All animals have adequate access to drinking water and food in quality and quantity in line with their species-specific needs.
- Animals in captivity are provided with a naturally enriched environment and are able to hide from view if wanted. Enclosures are kept hygienically clean, well maintained and free of excessive artificial noise.
- Animals have access to a vet and appropriate healthcare.
- Enclosures provide sufficient space for movement, exercise and space to avoid conflicts with other animals.

Conservation

At Hutland Tours, we recognize the critical importance of preserving the natural environment and its biodiversity for future generations. As a tour company operating in areas rich in wildlife, landscapes, and natural resources, we are committed to supporting conservation efforts and minimizing our environmental impact through sustainable tourism practices.

We are dedicated to:

- We ensure that our tours promote the conservation of local ecosystems, wildlife, and plant species. This includes respecting protected areas and supporting conservation programs in the regions we operate.
- We strive to minimize our carbon footprint, reduce waste, conserve water, and promote energy-efficient practices in all aspects of our business operations, from transportation to accommodations.
- We actively partner with local conservation organizations, wildlife reserves, and community-based projects to help protect endangered species and promote sustainable resource management. If possible, we include a visit of those projects in our tours and try to get clients actively and lastingly engaged.
- We are committed to raising awareness among our guests about the importance of conservation. Our guides will inform visitors about the local environment, responsible behavior, and the significance of preserving the natural world.
- We encourage responsible tourism by promoting low-impact travel options, such as eco-friendly accommodations and transportation, and discourage activities that may harm the environment or wildlife

Human Rights

At Hutland Tours, we are deeply committed to upholding the fundamental principles of human dignity, equality, and fairness in all aspects of our business operations. As a tour company, we recognize that the tourism industry has a powerful role in shaping societies and communities, and with this comes the responsibility to respect and promote human rights, protect vulnerable groups , and ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals involved in our tours.

- We believe that human rights are universal and indivisible, and we are dedicated to ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background, race, gender, age, disability, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation, are treated with respect and dignity.

- We recognize the unique challenges faced by minority and vulnerable groups, including but not limited to ethnic minorities, women, children, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities. We are dedicated to ensuring that these groups are respected, their voices are heard.

- We are committed to conducting our business ethically and with integrity, which includes ensuring that no part of our operations or supply chain contributes to human rights violations. We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or exploitation in any form. Our code of conduct is based on respect for human rights, local cultures, and environmental responsibility.

- To ensure that our commitment to human rights is reflected in our daily operations, we will provide regular training for all employees and partners. This training will cover topics such as human rights, gender equality, child protection, and cultural sensitivity. By fostering a deeper understanding of these issues, we aim to ensure that all individuals involved in our tours act in accordance with our human rights policy.

- We will regularly assess and monitor the implementation of this policy across all aspects of our business. Any violations or breaches of this policy will be taken seriously and addressed promptly, with corrective actions taken to prevent recurrence. We encourage open communication and feedback from our staff, guests, and the communities we engage with, in order to continuously improve our human rights practices.

Child protection

We are committed to the protection of children from all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, and we strongly oppose any form of child abuse or trafficking. Hutland Tours adheres to the principles and guidance of TheCode.org and strives to become a top member in the same organization.

Clear guidelines have been established for potential school visits. All staff, tour guides, partners, and clients are informed on how to recognize suspicious behavior or signs of potential child abuse or trafficking, along with the appropriate actions to take in response.

Tour guides and drivers

Hutland Tours is dedicated to hiring qualified local guides, porters, drivers, and other external staff, offering them fair wages and ensuring safe, equitable working conditions. We recognize that guides serve as the bridge between guests and the socio-cultural and environmental context of the destination, guiding visitors in responsible behavior. As such, we ensure that all guides employed by or leading tours on behalf of Hutland Tours receive regular training and are well-versed in the destination's sustainability issues. Our guides undergo specialized training on sustainability topics, ensuring they fully understand and adhere to the company's sustainability policy.

Customer communication and protection

- We are committed to providing exceptional service and ensuring that every customer has a memorable, well informed, and safe experience with us. Our policy reflects our dedication to maintaining strong customer relations, upholding satisfaction, safeguarding customer protection, and ensuring privacy.
- We strive to exceed our customers' expectations by delivering high-quality tours and services. Our team is committed to providing timely, friendly, and helpful communication, addressing concerns promptly, and ensuring that all customer inquiries are handled with respect and professionalism.
- We actively seek feedback from our customers to continuously improve our offerings, ensuring that we meet their needs and enhance their experience. Specific information about their experience of our sustainability efforts are added in the post tour communication.
- We are dedicated to providing safe, secure, and comfortable tours, with well-trained staff who are prepared to assist in any situation. All activities are conducted in compliance with local regulations and safety standards.
- We are committed to safeguarding personal information and ensuring that all data provided by our customers is stored securely and used only for the purposes of fulfilling bookings, communication, and providing services. We will never share, sell, or disclose personal information to third parties without explicit consent, except as required by law.
- We commit to be truthful and transparent in our communication at all times, including every aspect of our sustainability strategy.

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