

Sustainability Policy

Introduction

Travel Hokkaido has a passion for sustainable travel. We have taken, and continue to take, steps to improve our sustainability, both in the office and in the travel and activity services we offer. We aim to further reduce any negative social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of the company's activities, including employee related health and safety aspects. We also aim to support the local communities of Hokkaido, reduce leakage from the local economy, conserve the environment and biodiversity, help mitigate against climate change, and encourage others to do the same.

1. Internal Environment Management

- a) In team meetings we quarterly review the use of disposable and consumer goods (such as paper) and plan actions for reducing use and for reducing our solid waste. Our current actions include the default printer settings being double sided, encouraging digitally storing data and transferring information (i.e. via email) as opposed to printing, and purchasing reusable goods wherever possible. All staff members have a responsibility to minimise their use of disposable goods (especially paper). Waste is sorted with separate bins for plastics, burnable waste, and bottles, cans and PET bottles, with recyclable goods being recycled (e.g. paper). We also refill toner and ink cartridges. We utilise a fully stocked kitchen with reusable cups and mugs that may be used by staff and encourage them to drink the safe to drink tap water, to reduce the use of single-use plastic cups/ water bottles.
- b) We purchase from sustainable suppliers and purchase sustainable products wherever possible; when sustainable options are available, are of sufficient quality and are not of unreasonably high costs. We check all our suppliers to ensure ethical purchasing, and that they are environmentally conscious (e.g. minimising pollution and waste).
- c) We are actively committed to reducing our energy consumption, both within the office and in our services. We monitor our electricity usage with aims to reduce, which are discussed during team meetings. We have implemented and continue to consider various energy saving measures. We already use energy-saving light bulbs, keep all our equipment on energy-saving mode, and ensure heaters and fans are used effectively (e.g. keeping windows closed when heaters are on). We plan on changing our equipment to more energy efficient equipment in the future, to further reduce our energy consumption.

- d) We ensure that all lighting and equipment (including computers, photocopier, printer) are turned off when not in use. The final employee leaving a room must always turn the lights off. We have an 'End of Day Checklist', which all staff are informed of, for when the last employee leaves the office and it ensures everything is turned off prior to them leaving.
- e) We ensure all leaky taps are fixed promptly and have included 'check the tap is properly turned off' as part of our 'End of Day Checklist', to minimise our water consumption. We also use water responsibly when washing our vehicles and ensure not taps are left running. The toilet in the office is a water saving toilet, with dual flush and a toilet-sink combo. We do not operate in areas of high water risk.
- f) A number of our employees work remotely to reduce the need to travel to and from the office, thus reducing the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are associated with many transport methods. Staff are encouraged to use more sustainable means of transport when commuting, such as cycling, and we have a bike rack at the office where those cycling can securely park. Also, the Company Directors live in the same building as the office, further minimising transport impacts.
- g) We minimise and substitute the use of any harmful substances, such as cleaning materials, by harmless products and processes. Furthermore, we properly manage the storage, handling and disposal of all chemicals. Wastewater (including greywater) is disposed of through the government sewage system.
- h) We communicate our expectations regarding sustainability to our employees (including tour guides) through both formal and informal team meetings to explain the importance of sustainability in the company. They must comply with our sustainability policy (which will be sent to them via email), communicate with our customers the benefits of sustainable travel and reflect on how sustainable their own lifestyles are. We encourage our employees to consider more sustainable alternatives in their own lives outside of work and our company values are a large part of our recruitment process.
- i) In consultation with our staff team, we have begun the move towards a full ban of the use of single use plastic water bottles by our staff in both our office and during our tours (final deadline is summer 2020). All staff must bring in their own reusable water bottle or use the reusable cups available in our office kitchen.

2. Transport

- a) The most sustainable method of transport is used when selecting for customers, taking into consideration the number of people travelling, how much luggage they have, price and comfort. Number of empty seats are minimised in order to reduce GHG emissions per person as much as possible. The transport options owned by the company are car, HiAce bus and micro bus, where the most sustainable choice is always chosen. For larger groups, where coaches are hired, we match the size of vehicle to the group size in order to reduce emissions per person and hire new/er vehicles with positive eco ratings. As all of our transport options are chosen proportional to the size of the group, any luggage with them, and their chosen destinations, we are able to ensure guest comfort and maintain a high level of service, as guests are not too cramped, and all vehicles are of good quality. All of our vehicles are eco rated, with newer vehicles being ensured to hold eco vehicle certification. Sometimes multiple smaller vehicles may have to be used for excursions, due to the practicalities of parking, but this is rare, and efforts are made to avoid this scenario. For guided city tours, food tours, night tours etc we use the subway system as a means of transport, as it is both very sustainable and practical, due to urban environments having high levels of congestion.
- b) We offer transport to all airports across Hokkaido, to prevent the need for short distance connection flights within the island. We discourage our customers from travelling this way and instead recommend our own travel services which are much more sustainable, more affordable and still very comfortable.

3. Accommodation

- a) In the next 5 years we endeavour for all our contracted accommodations to have their own sustainability initiatives, with as many having sustainability accreditations as possible. This is a relatively new field within Japan, but our guesthouse connections are already quite proactive in this area.
- b) We prefer contracting more sustainable accommodations, especially those with internationally acknowledged travel certification, and include our sustainability policies within any relevant contracts. Our contract includes basic sustainable measures that we require them to comply with, such as sustainable use of basic local services (food, water, energy, healthcare, soil) so as not to endanger the provision or integrity of these services to the neighbouring local communities.

Violation of our sustainability policies will result in termination of the contract, and any future cooperation will cease until initiatives have been taken to effectively improve the accommodation's sustainability.

4. Activities/Tours

- a) We ensure all the activities and tours we offer comply to a certain level of sustainability, with none negatively impacting local communities or the environment. We offer no activities that harm humans, animals, plants, natural resources (e.g. water/energy), or are socially/culturally unacceptable. We aim to improve the sustainability of our excursions, such as by ensuring our customers are well educated on culture and customs for more sensitive tours, such as visits to Ainu villages and settlements and Shrine visits, which we do by linking informative documents (written by us) to the activity pages on the website, and/or emailing these documents to customers who are booking these tours. This will be fully implemented by January 2020.
- b) We always give preference to activities and tours who have good sustainability standards, and we only offer excursions in which captive wildlife are held when they are properly regulated activities in compliance with local, national and international law with authorised and suitably equipped staff. For instance, the only bear enclosure activity that is offered by us is Bear Mountain in Sahoro, as it is a sanctuary for rescue bears where we are confident that animal welfare is well maintained. Where we feel uncertainty, we do not offer the activity.
- c) We offer no activities where wildlife species are harvested, consumed, displayed, sold, or traded, except when it is regulated activity (such as ice fishing) that ensures that their utilisation is sustainable and in compliance with local, national and international law.
- d) We ensure we have skilled guides when visiting sensitive cultural sites (e.g. Akan Ainu Village), heritage sites or ecologically sensitive destinations, who are well-educated on the site, the culture and the history. Our tour guides are knowledgeable regarding the destination including relevant sustainability aspects, due to receiving sufficient training. They are able to provide information and interpretation to customers on relevant sustainability matters in the destination (e.g. endangered Blakiston's fish owl, how logging, overgrazing and poaching for subsistence purposes is threatening habitats, preservation of Ainu culture), social norms and values (e.g. bowing, taking off shoes) and human rights (e.g. sexual exploitation).

- e) Many of our activities directly involve and support local people and businesses (e.g. Mochi Making, Farm Experience, Paper Making and Kayaking). We recommend local restaurants and shops to our customers, inform them of the traditional craftsmanship and local industries, as well as help them interact with the locals. We also prefer working with accommodations and restaurants that incorporate elements of local art, architecture or cultural heritage; while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.
- f) We offer tours and activities that support the local environment and biodiversity, such as visiting Hokkaido's national parks and a rescue bear sanctuary: Bear Mountain. We aim to offer more tours that specifically help support the local environment and plan to do so by the end of 2020.
- g) When choosing new tour destinations, we consider sustainability aspects, such as community participation and whether it's a traffic-free area. We pride ourselves on our off-the-beaten track local knowledge and offer many alternative non-mainstream destinations. We consider the means of transport that would be used when choosing new destinations, depending on the reachability of them, and how more sustainable methods could be used.
- h) Travel Hokkaido and any of our associated companies do not promote souvenirs which contain threatened flora and fauna species as indicated in the CITES treaty and the IUCN 'Red List'; historic and archaeological artefacts (except as permitted by law). We discourage all our customers from purchasing these types of goods.

5. Customer Communication

- a) All sustainability claims and information provided by Travel Hokkaido is factually correct, balanced and complete.
- b) We inform customers of ways to calculate the carbon emissions they generate by travelling and how they can offset these emissions. We also inform them of which airlines produce less emissions, and therefore the ones we recommend they fly. By the end of 2020, we aim to include GHG / carbon off-set of air transport as a voluntary option when booking with us, where payment can be channelled through the company. We also aim to form a sustainable package tour, where the carbon offset fee will be included in the price.
- c) We recommend more sustainable accommodations, tours, activities and transport options by advertising with sustainability certifications, any statistics that have been calculated by a reliable third party (e.g.

bookdifferent.com) and what we ourselves have deemed more sustainable (we clarify when this is the case).

Signed: P Ohata

Date: 11/11/19

Review date: 11/11/20