

Sustainability policy

In general, sustainability means meeting the needs of the current society without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This being the overall concept of sustainability, for Freeland in particular about tourism, sustainability means our interest in the economic wellbeing of our company without compromising the wellbeing of the environment and the people we are working in and with and the sustainable business practices we follow for its realization.

Freeland is a new tour operator that joined the industry almost four years ago. These past years were basically learning and development stages for us. In line with this, we are also learning and further improving ourselves in the area of sustainability and sustainable tourism management. The concept being new for a country like ours, Ethiopia, ticking all the boxes of sustainability and practicing sustainable actions in strict sense is not only difficult but impossible to attain at this stage. However, as all things, sustainability has also to start being practiced at least at a level that is feasible in the system and the country we exist. To achieve that, Freeland has appointed a sustainability coordinator for the company and has come up with the following basic and crucial sustainability policies we adhere to practice and expect our suppliers to follow too at the minimum.

Sustainable office management policies:

- To reduce excess water consumption and unnecessary wastage all staff members including us should use our own long-lasting water bottles and customers must be served with glass water that will be poured from a bigger recyclable water container we buy.
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- To reduce water wastage, we use a water sink wash our dishes and water bottles rather than running the water continuously while not using. Plus, we also use a bucket and a mop to clean our office floor and car.
- Avoid the use of plastic bottles and plastic use and throw cups for water and beverages at the office and during any work of Freeland.
- Minimize the use of paper in day-to-day office work by using email, other social media channels for communication with customers and when must, apply double page printing.
- No lights are turned on unless at night and make sure all lights are turned off, sockets are plugged out and all energy is turned off when leaving office.
- Waste at the office has to be properly sorted and disposed in a responsible way.
- We also firmly believe sustainability starts from ourselves and we plant trees annually through the Ethiopian green legacy program. We have planted 20 the first year and 30 for the second term this year (50 trees in total so far). Our planted trees from the last year have all grown and we feel so proud of this practice. Hence, Freeland staffs will annually plant trees and have a responsibility to make sure they do also grow.

Sustainable supply chain management policies:

1. Sustainable transport policy:

- We do business with two transport companies whose cars are the latest and the drivers are well mannered and experienced.
 - We make sure these cars also make the necessary vehicle service and maintenance regularly. This coupled with the latest nature of their cars enables efficient use of fuel.
 - We have a code of conduct for our own drivers and the drivers who come from these two companies. The drivers are disciplined, have a good record, and understand our sustainability policy encouraging tourists for walks whenever possible.
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2. Sustainable accommodation policy:

- All accommodation facilities we work with should at least be environmentally sustainable in terms of their use of water, light, and energy.
- They must adhere to the respect, safety and human rights protection of their employees and their payment of competitive wages.
- They have proper and environmentally responsible waste management system.
- They should refrain from the practice of sexual exploitation of children in their premises and make sure they do not host guests of such behavior. In case they also notice such practice, they are responsible to report it.

3. Sustainable policy regarding local guides:

- All our tour guides are skilled and certified.
- They have the necessary knowledge of the destination sights.
- They really understand the concept of sustainability and our policy towards it. With this we know they are advocates of sustainability with knowledge to properly explain sustainability matters of destinations to our guests.
- Local guides are aware of the practice of sexual exploitation of children, do not engage in any form of this practice with tourists and locals, and report it whenever they encounter the practice.

4. Sustainable activities/excursions and destination policy:

- All excursion activities related to people should take ‘cultural and religious sensitivity’ into consideration and should be performed in ways that are acceptable by the community of destination.
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- All excursion activities in relation with animals (wildlife) should also be aligned with the respect of animal rights and refraining from their abuse in any form; and Freeland makes sure tourists refrain from excursions that engage the abuse of domestic animals and the involvement of captive wildlife.
 - Guests are always encouraged to engage in walking while participating in these excursions to cut back on fuel consumption.
 - Both tourists and guides are encouraged to in activities that target the protection and preserving of our tourist sites/destinations.
 - Freeland will continue to do inventory of each of our tour packages in terms of cultural, religious, and environmental for their sensitivity and appropriateness and will develop guidelines to be followed by tourists when visiting each site; encourages cultural excursions in a manner that considers cultural sensitivity; and encourages community tourism where tourists engage in excursions: participating in markets, farming, cooking... where sustainability is given priority,
 - Refrain from excursions that in any way involve sexual exploitation in general and of children.
 - All in all, we work eagerly and highly towards turning our day-to-day practices at Freeland, at destinations and on the journey as sustainable and as eco-friendly.
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