



Sustainability policy of Zbulo! Discover Albania

Purpose

The company is committed to creating and offering sustainable travel adventures in Albania and Western Balkans with minimal impact on the environment, contributing to local economies and communities. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework of guidelines by which the products and services offered are based on best responsible practices when created or implemented by.

Scope

This policy applies to all our activities and staff of Zbulo, (as well as volunteers and freelance) from operations, management to executive. It will be communicated to our customers, suppliers and people we do business with and wherever possible they will be asked to meet this policy as a minimum.

All our team is responsible for implementing the company's sustainability policy.

Sustainability management & legal compliance

Sustainability commitment

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

We will use the Travelife platform to report on our sustainability progress and to monitor and evaluate progress. We are committed to (publicly) communicating our sustainability performance (by means of the Travelife report) every two years.

Sustainability management & legal compliance

Zbulo 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.

Zbulo follows 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 Code of Ethics, including a zero-tolerance policy for corruption, bribery, and discrimination.

Internal management: social policy & human rights

Employees

- Zbulo supports both career-related and job-related professional development activities.
- Zbulo is committed to the principle of fair and equal pay for like work and for work of equal value for all its employees, and contractors, regardless of gender/sex, race, national origin, marital status, age, religion. Zbulo is committed to fostering a safe, healthy, and inclusive workplace/work culture where all employees are able to perform their duties/to recognize their potential.
- Zbulo is committed to a zero-tolerance policy for acts of bribery, corruption, discrimination, and violation of human rights, including human trafficking, and all rights of children.
- Zbulo further expects this commitment from all partners and suppliers.

Internal management: environment

Environmental management of office operations

- ◆ We are committed to keeping the direct footprint of our business operations as minimal as possible and actively follow circularity/the 5Rs (refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle)/sustainability/environmentally- sound principles. We have the following measures in place:
 - Follow all local and national regulations concerning environmental law
 - Measure, monitor, and evaluate use of all commodities and products purchased, especially in terms of water, waste, energy, and carbon
 - Procure office supply: locally, seasonally, fair trade, in bulk, with limited packaging, sustainability certified whenever possible
 - Print only when necessary, and when printing, always print double-sided on grayscale. Paper must always be FSC or equivalent certified, with preference for the highest percentage post- consumer materials
 - Energy saving measures are in place in all common areas
 - All equipment and lighting is energy-efficient and turned off/unplugged/on sleep mode when not in use
 - For the waste, we aspire to be separated into the following categories: plastic, organic, paper. Currently is disposed of properly by the municipality.
 - Water consumption is in every one of us consciousness to use it responsibly
 - Noise, light, and air pollution is minimized

Carbon management of office operations

- ◆ Zbulo is committed to reducing our carbon footprint and endeavors to reduce the amount we travel as much as possible:
 - Reduce the amount we travel as much as possible
 - Monitoring and measuring carbon footprint with the aim to reduce as much as possible.
 - 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, bikes.
 - Installing energy efficient equipment and appliances where appropriate/possible especially in the office.

Land use

- ◆ Zbulo offices are located in an urban area and abides 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

- ◆ Zbulo 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.
- ◆ Whenever possible, Zbulo prefers to work with partners that share the company's commitment towards sustainability. This means that we prefer partners that have a written sustainability statement as an integral part of their business policy and/or a clear sustainability policy in place.

- Zbulo prefers 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.
- Whenever possible, Zbulo prefers to select partner companies that comply with tourism-specific, internationally recognized (GSTC-accredited) certifications, or other sustainability certifications like B Corp or ISO.
- Whenever possible, Zbulo offers incentives for partners that are actively engaged in sustainable operations.
- Zbulo expects its suppliers to adhere to a Code of Ethics 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

Our complete supplier Code of Ethics is annex in the contracts with basic/standard sustainability clause(s) addendum to contracts, available here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1n_T-fBBY_aNAvm8wd9-58a-5htOsEFSDizICBSopbc/edit

- Following a zero-tolerance policy, Zbulo will terminate any relationships with suppliers that violate the Code of Ethics, specifically through acts of bribery, corruption, discrimination, and violation of human rights unless positive commitment and reasonable negotiation have not taken place to solve the issue.
- Zbulo raises awareness amongst its suppliers to adopt sound social and environmental practices, and to minimize their carbon footprint.

- Zbulo maintains open lines of communication with our suppliers and partners and encourages feedback from our stakeholders at any time and on any topic, particularly sustainability.
- Travelife has developed specific Codes of Conduct for various activity types that will be helpful to put to use and distribute to Zbulo's suppliers. <https://www.travelife.info/sustour/?menu=codes>

Inbound partner agencies

- Zbulo operates as an inbound agency itself for other tour operators, does not operate with inbound partner agencies.

Transport

- Zbulo collaborates with providers adhere to the company's Code of Ethics.
- When selecting transport for guests and business related travel, Zbulo commits to choosing, whenever possible, the most environmentally friendly options available for traveling to, from, and within the destination – taking into consideration distance, price, route, carbon footprint and comfort.
- Zbulo has implemented clear guidelines for reducing GHG emissions from transport and selecting the most environmentally friendly transport options, including the following measures:
 - Using public transportation options in the destinations
 - Using appropriate vehicle sizes for group sizes and purchasing most efficient vehicles available, whenever possible
 - Raising awareness in drivers on eco-driving techniques

Accommodations

- Zbulo collaborates with providers adhere to the company's Code of Ethics.
- In the accommodation selection process, Zbulo considers the sustainability practices of an accommodation by taking into account their sustainability management and social and environmental footprint.
- Most of our accommodations are small guesthouses run or owned by local people.
- Zbulo favors the selection of accommodations that respect and protect land use, as well as respectfully highlight elements of local architecture, customs and traditions.
- Zbulo favors the selection of accommodations that employ local communities

Activities & Excursions

- Zbulo collaborates with providers that adhere to the company's Code of Ethics.
- Zbulo has clear guidelines in place for environmentally and culturally sensitive activities offered by or on behalf of the company. These guidelines are actively communicated to guests as well as distributed and implemented by activities providers and guides: Leave No Trace.

- All activities run by or on behalf of Zbulo respect local customs, traditions, cultural integrity, and natural resources.
- Zbulo commits to not offering any activities that harm humans, wildlife, environment, or natural resources such as water and energy.
- Zbulo gives preference to activities that benefit local communities, respect animal welfare and support environmental protection.
- Zbulo provides attraction providers opportunities for sustainability learning and management, including free access to the Travelife online learning and reporting platform.
- Zbulo does not offer Excursions

Tour leaders, local representatives, and guides

- Zbulo commits 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.
- Zbulo understands that guides are the intermediaries between the guests and the socio-cultural and environmental context of the destination, conveying the appropriate behavior to them. Therefore, we make sure that all guides hired by or leading tours on behalf of Zbulo are trained regularly and knowledgeable in the sustainability topics of the destination.
- Our guides are trained on critical issues in tourism.
- Within this year, Zbulo will provide guides with learning opportunities on sustainability topics including providing free access to the Travelife online learning platform.

Destinations

Sustainable destinations

- Zbulo prefers to work in destinations that have committed to sustainability as an integral part of community and destination development.
- Zbulo aims to send visitors to secondary or lesser-known tourist areas to avoid over tourism.
- Zbulo does not support destinations that have a questionable human rights track record.

Contribution to local communities / local economic network

Zbulo commits 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
- 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, labor rights, etc.) as well as land rights

Environmental stewardship in destinations

Zbulo commits 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 behavior

Customer communication and protection

Privacy

- Our customer protection is our priority. Therefore, we maintain a clear privacy policy (<https://zbulo.slabb.com/posts/privacy-policy-2020-y0wyv8pv>) to ensure:
 - Legal compliance in all regards
 - Customers and their data are protected
 - Customers know how their information is being used

Marketing and communication

- Zbulo strives to be truthful in all situations and at all times. We offer products and services that do what we claim in our communications.
- We honor our explicit and implicit commitments and promises.
- We are anti-greenwashing and stand behind our sustainability claims 100%.
- We endeavor to be inclusive and representative in our marketing, and 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:

- Certified accommodations

- Activities that benefit the local communities and environmental protection
- Responsible shopping of souvenirs

Customer experience

The company aims for all customer experiences to be positive, and follows strict health and safety, marketing, and activities policies to ensure customer satisfaction. These policies cover specific topics of (but not limited to):

- Health and safety
- Emergency procedures
- Privacy
- Group numbers
- Greenhouse Gas emissions
- Transport
- Shopping
- Sexual exploitation
- Children in tourism
- Satisfaction and complaints

Zbulo maintains open lines of communication with our customers and encourages 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.

Sustainability coordinator, Suela Tahiraj, who can be reached at suela@zbulo.org will lead the implementation of this policy.

Definitions

Sustainability: In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Sustainable tourism: The UN Environment Program and UN World Tourism Organization defines it as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

Guidelines: A guideline is something that can be used to help you plan your actions or to form an opinion about something.

Policy: A set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government, or a political party

Code of ethics: A code of ethics in business is a set of guiding principles intended to ensure a business and its employees act with honesty and integrity in all facets of its day-to-day operations and only engage in acts that promote a benefit to society.

Effective date

This policy is effective from **30.12.2022**.

Revision history

This policy was revised on **30 December 2022**.

This policy will be revised by **30 April 2023**.

The company's management supports this policy

Signature:

Ricardo Fahrig


