

Sustainability Policy of “Destination Karakol”

The mission of Karakol Destination is to create a sustainable, competitive tourist destination based on the principles of "green economy" with the development of a multinational culture and identity, as the best place to live and tourist destination.

Objectives of NGO “Karakol Destination”:

- To improve the economic and social well-being of the destination, by developing the tourist potential, raising awareness and attractiveness of the destination. and attractiveness of the destination.
- To contribute to the preservation and development of historical and cultural heritage, traditions and customs of all the peoples and ethnic groups of the destination
- To preserve the region's biodiversity and reduce the anthropogenic impact, contribute to the preservation of ecological processes and environmental protection
- Effectively manage the destination, by strengthening the social to manage the destination efficiently, by strengthening the social partnership and the institutional development of the organization

Given the actual and potential impacts of tourism on natural resources, we seek to minimize these impacts through our own policies and practices, including:

Sustainability Management and Legal Compliance

- We strictly adhere to all national laws, regulations and professional codes of practice, ensuring compliance at all levels of our operations.
- All employees have the right to free choice of employment and decent working conditions that comply with national labor laws. We comply with minimum age requirements for employment: all of our employees are over 18 years of age and we strictly exclude child labor.
- We ensure equal opportunity in recruitment, working conditions, access to training, development and promotion. Discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, disability, religion or any other grounds is unacceptable.
- We ensure the safety of our employees and guests. First aid kits are available in the offices and on tours and emergency plans are in place. Regular health and safety briefings and training are provided.
- We build fair and transparent relationships with suppliers, ensuring decent pay and working conditions.
- We give preference to suppliers who are committed to sustainability, including hotels, restaurants and transportation companies.
- We clearly articulate our sustainability goals to partners by including relevant clauses in supplier contracts or sharing our Supplier Code of Conduct and Sustainability Policy.
- Our marketing is transparent and honest. Customers receive detailed information about the products we offer, including our sustainability commitments. All services are provided in accordance with contracts and approved programs, and client confidentiality is strictly respected.
- We actively participate in forums and working groups that promote sustainable tourism development and engage with all stakeholders to enhance social collaboration.
- We inform tourists of available sustainable alternatives in accommodation, excursions and transportation where such opportunities exist.
- We encourage tourists to support local artisans by purchasing handicrafts and locally produced goods, thereby contributing to the local economy.

Sustainable practices in the office

- We strive to minimize paper usage. We have eliminated unnecessary document printing, and all essential documents are printed in paper-saving mode by default (double-sided printing and optimized usage). The printing of promotional materials is limited to cases where it is truly necessary, such as for fairs. Additional information is always available on our website, and materials are provided in electronic format.
- We have eliminated single-use plastic from our office. Instead, we use reusable water dispensers, refillable printer cartridges, and reusable utensils.
- We prioritise products locally sourced, with minimal packaging, made from sustainable materials and designed to last. Where possible, we partner with local suppliers, social enterprises and companies with a good reputation for sustainability.
- Whenever possible, we purchase environmentally certified products available in Kyrgyzstan. For example, we use environmentally friendly detergents and FSC-certified paper for office cleaning, which confirms our commitment to sustainable development.
- We avoid unnecessary or harmful packaging, purchase products in large volumes, prefer returnable packaging, and reuse or recycle leftover package materials.
- We are mindful of energy consumption and strive to minimize it. Lights and equipment are turned off when not in use, and all appliances run in energy-efficient mode. When we purchase new equipment, we choose models with low energy consumption.
- We reduce water consumption by installing dual-flush systems in restrooms and promoting water conservation among employees.
- We adhere to local waste management regulations, actively sorting recyclable materials, organizing their collection and ensuring environmentally sound disposal.
- We strive to minimize pollution by optimizing our operations to reduce potential impacts, including noise, light, air, water, and soil pollution.
- In order to reduce CO2 emissions from travel, we travel only when necessary, we use online communication tools, encourage employees to walk or use public transportation, measure CO2 emissions from travel to monitor environmental impact, and plan business trips in advance to optimize routes and minimize unnecessary travel.

Excursions

- We focus on creating long-term tour products that meet sustainability criteria and contribute to the economic development of the region.
- We exclude from our offerings excursions that may harm the environment, natural resources (including water and energy), animals, plants or people, as well as those that do not comply with social and cultural norms.
- When organizing excursions, we strictly adhere to best practices with respect to animals and their welfare. Excursions involving the keeping of wild animals in captivity are not conducted unless such activities are strictly regulated and in full compliance with local, national and international laws.
- We do not harvest, use, display or sell wildlife, except for regulated programs aimed at sustainable use of natural resources within the legal framework.
- We form groups of tourists to travel together to minimize vehicular traffic in remote mountainous areas.
- We educate tourists on how to minimize the ecological footprint of their travels and promote responsible behavior in natural areas. For example, we forbid leaving garbage and starting fires in areas where it can harm the ecosystem.
- We contribute to the development of cultural tourism by supporting the diversity and uniqueness of the destination's cultural traditions. We respect the cultural and religious traditions of ethnic groups by informing tourists about key aspects of tours, especially if they have religious significance.
- Before and during the journey, we provide tourists with full information on safe practices, environmental and cultural aspects, and assist with the preparation of border passes if necessary.

- We prefer to work with local guides with in-depth knowledge of the region and its sustainability features. All guides have undergone mandatory training and hold the necessary licenses, especially for excursions to religious, historical and ecologically significant sites. Our guides play a key role in educating tourists about sustainability, cultural etiquette and conservation.

Supporting the local community

- We prefer accommodation owned and managed by local people. These can be traditional guesthouses, small local hotels or yurts, supporting the local economy and preserving the unique flavor of the region, rather than staying in large chain hotels.
- We pay special attention to protecting the rights of children. Our accommodation supply chain follows all measures to ensure their safety. We exclude visits to schools and kindergartens to avoid potential harm to the local community.
- We prioritize hiring local guides, drivers and service providers. These professionals are qualified and knowledgeable to teach tourists how to interact with the locals and their culture in a respectful and knowledgeable manner.
- Our tours include visits to restaurants with traditional local cuisine, allowing guests to experience the culinary heritage of the region.
- We also actively recommend local restaurants, stores and craft workshops, introducing guests to traditional crafts and promoting interaction with local people, which promotes sustainable tourism and strengthens social ties.
- We offer tourists souvenirs made by local artisans, emphasizing the uniqueness of the region. At the same time, we strictly prohibit the purchase of goods containing rare flora and fauna, endangered species, illegal historical artifacts or illegal substances. All souvenir purchases comply with local and international laws.
- We implement landscaping and litter cleanup programs in an effort to improve the region's environmental health and increase its attractiveness to tourists.

Policy implementation

Our Sustainability Policy came into effect on November 1, 2022 and covers a range of activities aimed at minimizing our environmental impact, supporting local communities and promoting responsible tourism.

Responsibility for the introduction and implementation of the policy rests with the Sustainability Coordinator in collaboration with the organization's management team. The policy is regularly monitored and updated every 12 months. Any changes due to new legislation or assessment results will be made promptly.

The policy was reviewed and updated in January 2025.