

Ventula Travel DMC

Travelife Sustainability Report 2019



Travelife 
PARTNER
Committed to sustainability

Affiliation:

UHPA

association of croatian
travel agencies

asta Small Business
Network

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SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR

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MISSION STATEMENT

Since the foundation of the company, our goal has been to operate in a socially responsible manner and to navigate towards sustainable development together with all our current and future partners and suppliers.

It is no longer necessary to look for a reason to act. Having entered Anthropocene - the latest proposed geological epoch, we are the first conscious generation witnessing human-induced climate change, unsustainable exploitation of natural and social resources for material gain, and the unconscientious or, to say the least, clumsy impacts of most intercultural policies.

It is in all of this that we find not only a reason and an incentive to act in a socially responsible manner, but a strong support from our customers who are proud to be part of an ever greater momentum that is steering the world towards reversing the negative effects caused by previous generations.

As far as we are concerned, we are all on a single mission – that of protecting the planet from ourselves, for ourselves.

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Following the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the Paris Agreement on December 12, 2015, which requires all EU Member States to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030, to mitigate the effects of global warming and halt global temperature rise, our company has committed itself to introducing CO2 offsetting into its operations and programs for its customers and partners since the end of 2019.

In order to achieve this goal and ultimately become climate neutral, we have developed a sustainability strategy based on two following pillars:

Pillar 1 - INTERNAL MANAGEMENT

With internal management, we are trying to clean up our own doorstep first and build a team that is ready to meet the challenges outlined in the second pillar. The most important elements of the first pillar are:

- ✓ Education and certification of staff
- ✓ Control of suppliers and use of consumables
- ✓ Use of alternative transportation solutions
- ✓ Waste management
- ✓ Calculation of emitted greenhouse gases

Pillar 2 - EXTERNAL MANAGEMENT

Proper contracting and scheduling can significantly reduce emissions at the outset, before even discharging them during programme execution. The remaining emissions are eliminated through compensation, using two different models: local and global. Locally we contribute by collective tree planting in collaboration with the local community, and globally through supporting foundations that have a very high percentage of efficiency in reducing greenhouse emissions in countries that are the world's largest pollutants. Therefore, the elements of the second pillar are:

- ✓ Focus on supplier selection and contracting
- ✓ Compensation of greenhouse emissions through the local model
- ✓ Collaboration with the local community
- ✓ Compensation of greenhouse emissions through the global model
- ✓ Stakeholder survey

It is also important to note that our company operates according to ethical principles and keeps abreast of new findings in the field of sustainable business, operating transparently and in accordance with applicable regulations. By introducing a quality control system in accordance with ISO 9001: 2015, we are continuously working to improve all our processes, and our Sustainability Policy is therefore aligned with the company's mission and vision and its strategic quality goals.

Ventula Travel DMC's sustainability policy is based on the preservation of natural, traditional and cultural values and a modern way of doing business.

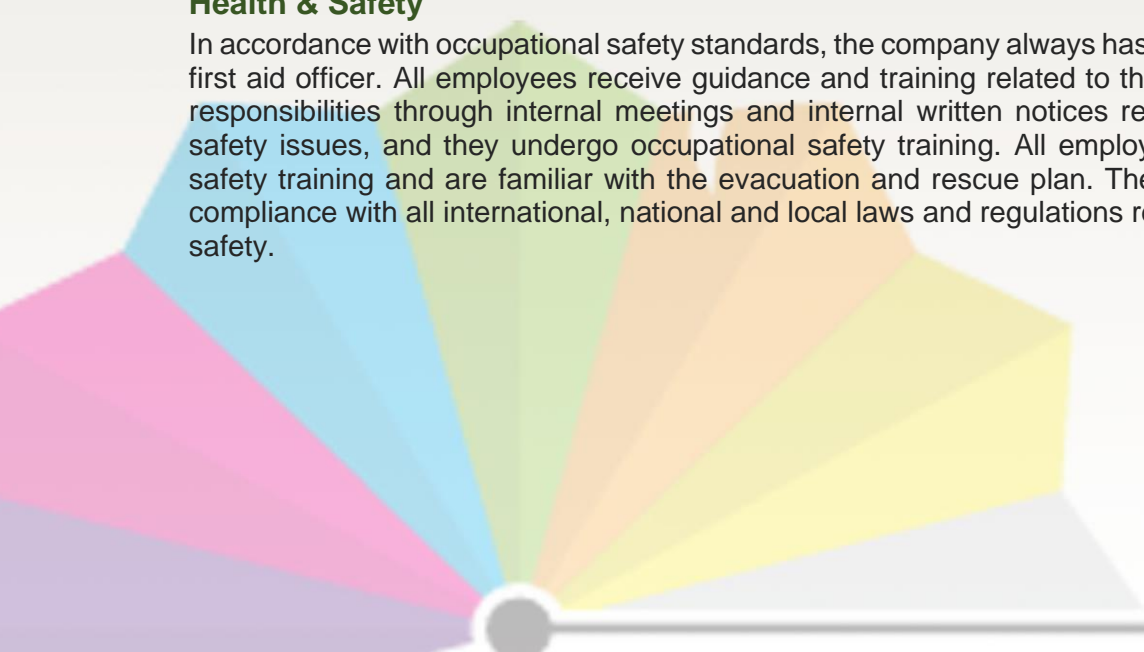
INTERNAL MANAGEMENT

Education

In our small, family-owned business each employee is directly involved in the implementation of sustainability through the sustainability policy and the resulting action. According to our action plan, we will continue to provide internal trainings in accordance with legal requirements and external trainings for harmonization of standards with our partners and suppliers (such as UHPA and Travelife). All employees have the opportunity to attend training courses and programs. In accordance with the requirement of ISO 9001-2015, the company keeps records of training on an annual basis.

Health & Safety

In accordance with occupational safety standards, the company always has at least one trained first aid officer. All employees receive guidance and training related to their roles, rights and responsibilities through internal meetings and internal written notices regarding health and safety issues, and they undergo occupational safety training. All employees have received safety training and are familiar with the evacuation and rescue plan. The company is in full compliance with all international, national and local laws and regulations related to health and safety.



Law and industrial standards compliance

Apart from being a member of UHPA's national association and a signatory to a collective agreement governing the rights of freedom and association of workers, the company also complies with the national legislation of the Republic of Croatia which prohibits any form of forced labor (the Labor Act). In its work, the company complies with the Articles 19 and 20 of the Labor Act relating to the prohibition of employment of children and minors. In accordance with the requirements of ISO 9001-2015, the company conducts employee satisfaction surveys at least once a year.

Travelife certification

Currently, we have the Travelife Partner status, which involves joining our efforts to adopt good practices of tourism sustainability and corporate social responsibility. Currently, two employees have obtained a personal Travelife Sustainability Manager certificate (making up 30% of company staff) which is stored in electronic form. With this certification, our goals are to develop and maintain sustainable growth, business efficiency and provide an educational experience for ourselves, our partners and our clients. In 2021, our aim is to become Travelife Certified.

EXTERNAL MANAGEMENT

Greenhouse gas emissions control

We are committed to putting in place systems and actions designed to, among other things, achieve emission reduction by delivering transparent and measurable parameters of constant decrease in the total carbon emissions per trip arising from our operations and travel experiences. We use CARMACAL, a carbon management tool for tour operators & DMCs, to map the carbon emissions of our trips. We calculate carbon emissions for every individual package, focusing on minimising their impact. Those carbon emissions that cannot be avoided will be compensated through both tree planting actions on a local scale (trees native to the area) and making donations to the relevant and proven carbon offset initiatives on a global scale. We want to be future-proof, offering local, authentic, responsible travel experiences for many years to come, which is why we have chosen to fully offset all emissions caused by travel organized by us.

Souvenirs

The company or its service providers do not promote or offer any souvenirs. If necessary, this item is covered by a sustainability clause in the contract we conclude with all our suppliers. We provide necessary information on authentic, locally and legally produced souvenirs to our clients. This way, we actively avoid harming our environment and its biodiversity.

Biodiversity protection

Mass tourism has had a profound impact on nature and biodiversity. Forests have had to make way for large hotels, marine life is endangered by large cruise ships visiting Croatian waters and nature conservation areas are losing to mass tourism – when it's the beauty of nature that attracts so many visitors in the first place. By consciously choosing small scale accommodation and careful consideration of the products and services we use, we support preservation of biodiversity. When visiting National Parks, we fully comply with the regulations of the NP management.

Sustainable package arrangements

Education about and preservation of many Croatia's World Heritage sites is our passion. Our company offers a sustainable package arrangement that supports archaeological research through a variety of funding models to educate dozens of students. In 2021, the company plans to offer a program that would include observing wildlife in its natural habitat, but in accordance with norms and codes of conduct. Being a program focused on photography, no animals will be disturbed or harmed.

Donations

We actively participate in the work of local associations, family farms and various cultural institutions, which allows us to present all the cultural treasures of Croatia and the neighbouring countries as authentically as possible through our programmes and activities. To support the continuation of scientific research and cultural preservation, donations are regularly made to the University of Zagreb: Department of Archaeology. As a part of our action plan for 2020, we plan to compensate all carbon emissions made by Ventula Travel DMC through group activities and donations on both local and global scale.

Customer relations

The company employees are advocates of a responsible attitude towards the environment and they inform our clients accordingly. In accordance with the sustainability policy, they also inform clients about the positive and negative impacts they can have on the destination. We focus on raising awareness of carbon footprint amongst our clients and travel partners around the world through education, encouragement and identifiable actions that will help us achieve our shared goals. Our goal is to develop new innovative travel experiences that are inherently low-carbon in nature.

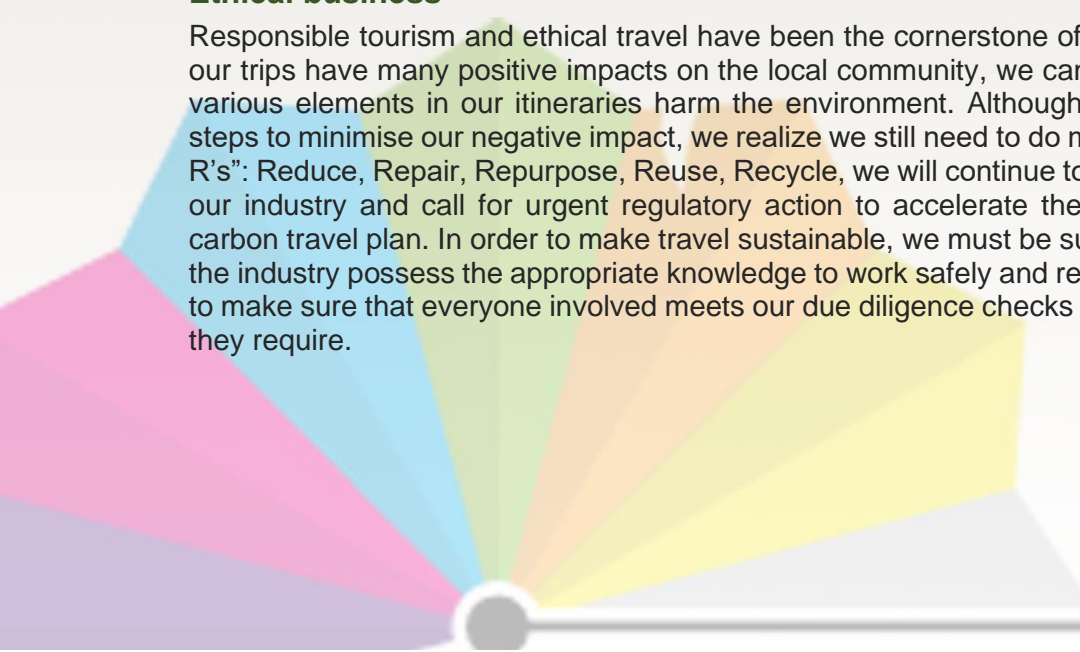
Reports

In accordance with the ISO 9001-2015 standards, the company systematically conducts customer satisfaction surveys and an integral part of the customer questionnaire is directly related to sustainability. The company has also defined procedures for filing and resolving customer complaints if necessary. Our efforts are focused on providing regular reports on our sustainable growth path and achievements made. The results are communicated to our suppliers, partners and clients via email, Ventula Travel website, social media accounts and other communication channels. No paper is used because all our reports are provided in digital form only.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Ethical business

Responsible tourism and ethical travel have been the cornerstone of our business; yet, while our trips have many positive impacts on the local community, we cannot escape the fact that various elements in our itineraries harm the environment. Although we have already taken steps to minimise our negative impact, we realize we still need to do more. Relying on "the five R's": Reduce, Repair, Repurpose, Reuse, Recycle, we will continue to advocate change within our industry and call for urgent regulatory action to accelerate the transition towards zero carbon travel plan. In order to make travel sustainable, we must be sure that those involved in the industry possess the appropriate knowledge to work safely and responsibly. We work hard to make sure that everyone involved meets our due diligence checks and receives the training they require.



Waste reduction

Since 2014, the company has been separating and adequately disposing of plastic, paper, electronic and oily waste, either at its own expense (*local authorities do not provide adequate waste disposal methods*), or with contracted companies. We do not use non-recyclable and non-biodegradable packaging materials; printer colour cartridges are replenished at a local electronic equipment company and, if unusable, are left at the same company that disposes of them properly in accordance with a waste contract. A container for adequate temporary disposal of used batteries is kept in the office area and all employees are aware of this. They are subsequently disposed of at designated bins for used batteries.

Energy consumption

In the office, we do our best to look after the planet: from an extra layer or two on a chilly day and walking to the office, to offering our brochures in digital form only and making sure our computers and lights have been switched off before leaving the office. The company is using low-energy equipment; office light bulbs, multifunction printer/scanner/copier, air conditioner etc. are all certified as low consumption products. Approximately 95% of the lighting used in and around the office is energy efficient (T-8, T-S, LED). Our efforts are constantly focused on implementing new office procedures and we are making sure to purchase energy efficient equipment with the goal of saving energy and resources. A multi-compartment waste bin for sortable waste is placed in the office and the sustainability manager provides training for employees in terms of waste sorting.

Paper

Fair trade products are difficult to reach in Croatia, but we certainly give priority to such products. For internal and administrative use, office paper produced according to the sustainable principle is used: NAVIGATOR FSC, designation - EU Ecolabel PT / 11/002 or MONDI FSC, EU code Ecolabel AT / 11/001. The company has a default double-sided print with low ink usage in all its print settings. Instead of printed brochures, the company uses digital formats in its business. The used paper is collected and recycled by our partners/suppliers.

Water, Waste & Chemicals

The policy of reducing water consumption is encompassed by the energy conservation and water consumption policy through monthly controls of consumers and raising employees' awareness of unnecessary water usage. All wastewater is processed by local eco-collectors before being safely discharged into the sea. Where applicable, cleaning is done without any use of electric energy or chemical solvents. Cleaning agents used are more than 90% biodegradable and, where available, bear the ECOLABEL label.

Declaration of accuracy of information

As a member of the UHPA professional association, the company is obliged to comply with the UNWTO 2001 Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and it therefore declares that all information regarding the company's marketing materials are accurate and in compliance with relevant standards.