

## SATOYAMA EXPERIENCE Sustainability Policy

### < Our Mission >

SATOYAMA EXPERIENCE, as a tour operator, accommodation provider and travel agency, contributes to sustainable tourism and the development of a sustainable society through its business.

We base all our actions on our sustainability policy, collaborate with all our stakeholders and do our best to enhance a sustainable society.

We aim to positively impact the areas where we offer our tours, facilitating and encouraging the continuation of their unique culture and biodiversity through introducing these to our guests. We believe our actions enhance the attractiveness of these areas to both visitors and residents.

### < Sustainability Policy >

SATOYAMA EXPERIENCE (henceforth referred to as SE) will act in a sustainable manner in accordance with the following ten principles, which are in line with international standards set by Travelife.

#### 1. Sustainability Management & Legal Compliance

- 1.1 We will appoint an employee to be responsible for the work of the sustainability coordinator and define his or her role and activities.
- 1.2 We will publish a sustainability mission statement for customers, partners and suppliers.
- 1.3 A qualified staff member who has successfully completed the international accreditation body's basic sustainability training and examination will undertake the role of sustainability coordinator and lead internal and external initiatives to promote sustainable activities in the company.
- 1.4 We will collaborate with, and are actively involved in, external forums and working groups supporting sustainability in tourism.



- 1.5 We will contribute to the tourism industry's sustainability by sharing the experiences gained and practices adopted in SE with stakeholders and operators in other regions.
- 1.6 We will support the sustainability efforts of nature conservation and community development organisations.
- 1.7 Wherever possible, we will work with travel agents and other partners who have sustainability accreditation and/or are committed to sustainability. Key suppliers in the region may not be certified but we will still work with companies or individuals that deal in local products, preserve local traditions and culture, or support local employment.
- 1.8 We will work to the standards of international accreditation bodies.
- 1.9 We will have a sustainability policy which aims to reduce any negative social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts resulting from our business activities. We will also ensure our staff's health, safety, and well-being.
- 1.10 Our sustainability policy will be published on our website for all staff, suppliers and the general public to view.
- 1.11 To maintain and improve the sustainability of our company, we will develop specific action plans to manage our goals, activities, methods, responsibilities and time commitment.
- 1.12 We will ensure that all staff understand and engage with our sustainability policy in order to continuously improve our sustainability performance.
- 1.13 We will regularly evaluate and share our progress in achieving objectives and targets related to our sustainability policy, including publishing numerical data such as electricity consumption and waste levels, to help us make improvements.
- 1.14 We will provide our staff with up-to-date information on our sustainability policies, initiatives, results and related information to improve our business.
- 1.15 We will report our progress on sustainability to the international accreditation body every two years. We will document our key sustainability achievements and publish them via our website every two years.

## **2. Internal Management: Social Policy & Human Rights**



- 2.1 In accordance with the "Trade Union Law", we will allow our staff the freedom to join trade unions and bargain collectively.
- 2.2 N/A
- 2.3 Staff members will be free to terminate their employment and contract with a minimum notice period of one month and without penalty, in accordance with their employment contract.
- 2.4 We will document our personnel policies clearly and make decisions fairly and openly.
- 2.5 We will enter into employment contracts with all staff, including details regarding working conditions and division of labour.
- 2.6 We will pay our staff a living wage equal to or higher than the legal minimum wage.
- 2.7 We will pay for overtime at a reasonable rate or allow the excess time to be made up by working reduced hours at other times.
- 2.8 Staff will have a social insurance contract in accordance with the law.
- 2.9 We will have workers' compensation insurance to protect our staff in the event of accidents at work.
- 2.10 All staff members will be entitled to annual leave with pay in accordance with national law.
- 2.11 Staff will be entitled to paid sick leave in accordance with national legislation.
- 2.12 We will have a health, safety and risk management policy for our staff. In the event of an accident or issue, we will investigate and take corrective action. Tour guides will be trained in first aid and carry first aid equipment during tours to deal with accidents appropriately.
- 2.13 We will not discriminate based on district of residence, gender, race, age, disability, religion/belief or sexual orientation in recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, training opportunities or promotion.
- 2.14 In compliance with the Labour Standards Act, we will not allow children who have not reached the national minimum working age to work.
- 2.15 We will have a documented procedure for staff to raise complaints about work. We will investigate complaints from staff appropriately and immediately.



- 2.16 We will provide a way for staff to approach senior management regarding key employment issues, with a clear process in place for following up any such representations.
- 2.17 The rules and procedures relating to disciplinary matters will be clearly set out and provided to staff.
- 2.18 We will employ people with special needs, such as physical disabilities. (Planned after recovery from business reduction due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic).
- 2.19 We will measure staff satisfaction regularly and reflect the feedback in our corporate management.
- 2.20 Regular training will be provided to staff on their roles, rights and responsibilities regarding social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights and health and safety practices, including risk management.
- 2.21 We will provide equal opportunities and funding for staff to receive regular training, learn about our work, and gain experience within the organisation to develop and progress.
- 2.22 We will welcome interns, both local and international, to our company.

### **3. Internal Management: Environment and Community Relations**

- 3.1 We will monitor and actively reduce our use of disposable consumables.
- 3.2 We will purchase and adopt sustainable goods and services wherever available and quality assured. We will also endeavour to buy locally whenever possible.
- 3.3 Paper for internal use will be recycled paper, either FSC or PEFC certified, or similarly sustainable products.
- 3.4 The copier will be set by default to use lined paper for single-sided printing to reduce paper use; when printing two or more sheets, the copier will generally print on both sides.
- 3.5 At least 50% of the coffee and tea served to guests and used in the office will be Fairtrade products or organically grown in Japan.
- 3.6 As far as possible, detergents will be non-toxic, non-eutrophic, biodegradable and eco-labelled.



- 3.7 We will order printed materials such as brochures and business cards from printers who use environmentally-friendly paper, inks and fonts, and who operate sustainably.
- 3.8 In principle, we will abolish the issuance of paper advertising media and encourage communication through electronic media, such as SNS advertisements and electronic data. Should paper materials be necessary, the minimum number of copies will be printed, using environmentally friendly paper (e.g. recycled or FSC certified paper).
- 3.9 To reduce brochure waste, we will use PDFs when providing our product information to travel agents and social networking sites for general guests, to attract visitors without relying on paper handouts. In addition, when we have no choice but to publish paper advertisements, their distribution will be measured, and we will carefully select where they are distributed in order to minimise the number of publications.
- 3.10 We will monitor electricity use monthly in order to understand our company's electricity consumption patterns and thus inform the evolution of our reduction policy; we will take continuous actions for ongoing reduction of our electricity consumption.
- 3.11 We will monitor our heating fuel and electricity consumption, measuring CO2 emissions and comparing these across different periods, with the aim of reducing such emissions.
- 3.12 We will contribute to developing sustainable energy supplies by signing contracts with electricity companies with zero CO2 emissions as far as possible.
- 3.13 We will strive to offset CO2 emissions from the use of fossil fuels within the company.
- 3.14 We will use energy-efficient lighting in the company, for example through the use of LEDs.
- 3.15 We will ensure that any equipment not being used is switched off.
- 3.16 Out of business hours, we will switch off lighting unless necessary. We will also install automatic switching systems using motion sensors in various areas of the premises to reduce unnecessary power consumption.



- 3.17 When purchasing new equipment, we will buy equipment with high energy efficiency performance as far as possible, taking into account cost-effectiveness and quality.
- 3.18 Appliances with an energy-saving mode, such as air conditioners, will actively use the energy-saving mode. For appliances without such a mode, we will strive to operate these with the minimum energy consumption, to achieve the same outcome as those with energy-saving settings.
- 3.19 We will implement a policy to reduce our water consumption through monthly monitoring and reduction measures. Our area is one of low water risk.
- 3.20 We will monitor water consumption monthly to manage usage and check for potential leaks, aiming to continuously reduce water usage through understanding water use patterns within the company.
- 3.21 Water-saving toilets have been installed in our facilities.
- 3.22 We will dispose of waste properly, complying with legislation and following the local rules.
- 3.23 We have developed and implemented a policy to reduce the volume of waste and promote recycling. We will measure the amount of both burnable and recyclable waste we generate, and work to reduce the total amount. Food waste will be composted and turned into fertiliser for use in agriculture.
- 3.24 We will reduce the amount of packaging materials we use. We will avoid using non-recyclable packaging materials.
- 3.25 Purified water dispensers have been installed and will be freely available for both visitors and staff to reduce the use of plastic bottles. We have also registered with mymizu (a water refill app) as a place where free water is available.
- 3.26 We will ensure that recyclable waste (e.g. paper, plastic, plastic bottles, cans, bottles and batteries) is separated and recycled according to local rules.
- 3.27 We will promote a paperless office and the reduction of paper and ink usage by avoiding unnecessary printing.
- 3.28 We will strive to reduce the use of disposable batteries through maximising the use of rechargeable batteries. Used batteries will be collected for recycling at the local recycling centre.
- 3.29 The local wastewater treatment system treats wastewater appropriately.



- 3.30 We will minimise the use of harmful substances such as pesticides and cleaning detergents. Any used will be treated and disposed of appropriately.
- 3.31 The staff will follow a travel policy that encourages sustainable transport options.
- 3.32 We will record staff business trips, including means and distance, to calculate carbon dioxide or greenhouse gas emission, and use the data in formulating reduction and offsetting policy.
- 3.33 Carbon and greenhouse gas emissions from business travel will be offset using nationally available and reliable methods. (To be implemented after business reduction due to the spread of coronavirus infection is lifted).
- 3.34 We will encourage and provide incentives for our staff to use sustainable travel options, such as public transport, walking or cycling. (To be implemented after recovery from business reduction due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic).
- 3.35 We will encourage teleworking and video conferencing to reduce CO2 emissions from unnecessary travel.
- 3.36 Regular staff workshops on environmental issues will be held in order to improve staff knowledge and awareness of environmental sustainability. (To be implemented after recovery from business reduction due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic).
- 3.37 We will comply with national legislation and local building regulation requirements when constructing, designing, refurbishing and demolishing buildings. We will also use locally appropriate, feasible, and sustainable methods and materials when designing and building new buildings or carrying out renovations.

#### **4. Partner Agencies**

As a local activity operator, this does not currently apply to us.

#### **5. Transport**



- 5.1 We will encourage the use of the most sustainable means of transportation possible when staff and guests need to travel to tour locations.
- 5.2 We will provide information regarding sustainable transportation to and from major airports on our website in order to recommend the most sustainable means to our customers in the near future.
- 5.3 When arranging intra-community transport, we will adopt or recommend to our customers the most sustainable transport option, considering price and comfort.
- 5.4 N/A





## 6. Accommodation

- 6.1 Our accommodation facility, SATOYAMA STAY, was built using locally available techniques and materials, and we are working on sustainability in all our services. In addition, whenever we recommend other accommodation to our customers, we will endeavour to introduce facilities which contribute to local sustainability.
- 6.2 N.A
- 6.3 We recommend SATOYAMA STAY, a directly managed accommodation facility that shares our sustainability policy. We will also undertake efforts to acquire certification relevant to sustainable accommodation facilities.
- 6.4 N.A
- 6.5 SATOYAMA STAY staff members will participate in local, national and international sustainability training and education programmes.
- 6.6 We will work with the Hida Tourism Association and Hida City government to promote the sustainability of SATOYAMA STAY.
- 6.7 N.A
- 6.8 In accordance with the Labour Standards Act, neither SATOYAMA STAY nor any other accommodation provider that we use will allow children under 14 to work.
- 6.9 SATOYAMA STAY is dedicated to preserving the townscape. Local arts and crafts are displayed in the accommodation. When arranging other facilities for guests, such as accommodation and restaurants, we will choose buildings designed in traditional Hida style, prioritising longstanding shops and restaurants which serve locally sourced Hida food.
- 6.10 N/A
- 6.11 N/A

## 7. Excursions and Activities

- 7.1 The activities offered by SE are managed based on a sustainable excursion policy. In addition, we will create a list of places at each tour location where cultural or environmental considerations exist, and share this list with all staff.



- 7.2 As in 7.1, we will operate activities based on our sustainable excursion policy in order to provide more sustainable products.
- 7.3 Our general sustainability policy and sustainable excursion policy will be published on the website and clearly communicated to all guides, including partner guides.
- 7.4 Based on the list referred to in 7.1, for tours and activities which take place in areas requiring special consideration in terms of nature or culture, participants will be provided with tour guidelines in order to minimise negative impacts and maximise their enjoyment.
- 7.5 We aim to acquire Travelife certification, and will operate our tours and activities in accordance with international standards.
- 7.6 We will not offer tours which have a negative impact on local people, animals, plants or natural resources, or tours which are socially or culturally inappropriate.
- 7.7 We will not offer tours or activities that feature captive wildlife.
- 7.8 We will not capture, eat, display, buy or sell wildlife.
- 7.9 We will not provide tours or activities that involve any contact with wildlife. If we offer activities in areas where wildlife lives, we will only use trails or roadways and make maximum effort not to adversely affect animal behaviour and habitat, except for unavoidable actions to preserve personal safety.
- 7.10 In culturally or ecologically sensitive areas, experienced guides who have been trained by organisations such as the Chubu Mountain Guides Association, Shirakawa-go Nature Guides Association and Goshikigahara Forest Guides Association will be in charge.
- 7.11 We will actively support the local community during our tours by using local goods and services, including traditional crafts, and restaurants which use local ingredients.
- 7.12 For tours which take place in protected areas, such as national parks and prefectural parks, we will actively provide information to our guests about the local environment on tours to raise awareness of local environmental protection.

## 8. Tour leaders, Local Representatives and Guides



- 8.1 All tour guides contracted by S.E. will have a written employment contract, including working conditions and job descriptions. We will ensure that they understand the terms and conditions of this contract.
- 8.2 In all employment contracts as tour guides contracted by SE, we guarantee they will be paid a wage equal to or higher than the local statutory wage or industry standard.
- 8.3 All tour guides will be suitably qualified and receive regular training.
- 8.4 All tour guides will understand and follow SE's sustainability policy.
- 8.5 All tour guides will receive basic training in tourism sustainability.
- 8.6 All tour guides will have an excellent knowledge of the region, including its sustainability aspects.
- 8.7 All tour guides will inform guests about relevant sustainability issues; these include the protection of flora and fauna and local cultural heritage, resource use, local social norms, values and manners, such as the inappropriacy of tipping, and human rights.
- 8.8 All tour guides will be educated about the prevention of sexual exploitation of children.

## 9. Destination

- 9.1 SE is based in the Hida region and provides activities essentially in the Hida area. We will respect the environment, local people, communities and culture according to our sustainability policy. Whenever we develop new products or collaborate with partners, we will always consider the sustainability aspects of the destination. We will not offer any products where tourism would harm the local community.
- 9.2 We will provide activities using sustainable modes of transport, such as cycling and walking, wherever possible. We will prioritise destinations to which travel by public transportation is possible.
- 9.3 The tours offered by S.E. will be committed to supporting the local economy. We believe that introducing visitors to sustainable products from local food producers and traditional craft workers, using local ingredients and conventional local techniques, will help to maintain and develop both the local economy and culture.



- 9.4 Our guides will only introduce products which have been produced and traded in compliance with national laws and international treaties, avoiding souvenirs containing endangered flora and fauna, as well as illegal artefacts.

## 10. Customer Communication and Protection

### <Prior to booking>

- 10.1 We will make our privacy policy publicly available on our website. We will ensure that customer privacy is never compromised.
- 10.2 In our marketing and public relations messages, such as pamphlets, brochures, websites and social networking sites, we are committed to complying with national laws and voluntary codes of conduct, providing only accurate information and never promising more than what is offered.
- 10.3 We will provide accurate information about tour products and prices. To help achieve this, we will send our sales-pack and price list to travel agents once a year to ensure that they are accurately informed of product details and prices. If any sudden changes are necessary, we will promptly update our website and communicate the changes to relevant partners.
- 10.4 We promise that the information provided about tourist destinations will be accurate and fair, whether communicated to guests directly or via travel agents through our website or in our sales-pack. Our website will also provide information regarding the sustainability aspects of the destination.
- 10.5 The tours and activity products offered by Satoyama Experience are essentially cycling, walking and snowshoeing. We will publicise the amount of CO2 emissions resulting from these activities in the near future.
- 10.6 We will provide sustainable transport options on our website for our customers' travel within Japan. We will also encourage our guests to use these as much as possible.
- 10.7 We will provide information on our website to recommend the most suitable means of transportation in terms of sustainability.
- 10.8 N/A
- 10.9 N/A



- 10.10 The theme of our tours is "Travelling through Life". We will introduce our guests to the sustainable lifestyle of *satoyama* by visiting places where locals actually live. Our Sustainable Excursion Policy will be openly available to the public on our website.
- 10.11 When advising and arranging individual travel, we will provide information on sustainable alternatives for accommodation, excursions, package holidays and transportation. (This information will become available on our website during 2023).
- 10.12 N/A

**<After booking and during trips>**

- 10.13 Destination information about the natural environment and local culture and heritage will be provided to guests through our website and tours.
- 10.14 Our guides will inform guests about ways in which they can contribute to sustainability as tourists, for example by recycling waste, purchasing genuine products or paying nature conservation fees.
- 10.15 To ensure the safety of our guests, we will provide information about suitable clothing and what to bring. We will also make sure in advance of tours that guests are in a healthy condition to participate, by asking them to complete a form detailing any allergies or chronic illness that may affect tour operations or personal safety. Furthermore, the same questions will be asked orally in person immediately before the commencement of tours to double-check any health conditions which may lead to a risk to personal safety. There is little risk from air, water, or food hygiene in the Hida region.
- 10.16 All tour guides will be required to carry lists with emergency contacts and procedures at all times so they can deal with any accidents or other emergencies.
- 10.17 We will provide a local contact telephone number in our confirmation email, via which guests can contact their guide on the day of their tour. All tour guides will undergo regular training in how to handle emergencies and understand all relevant procedures.
- 10.18 We will not condone commercial or sexual exploitation or harassment, especially of children or minors, under any circumstances.



- 10.19 We will endeavour to protect endangered species, significant historical or religious artefacts and products which are illegal to trade by providing information about these on our website. If we come across such illegal products during tours, we will provide appropriate information about illegally traded products and make efforts to deter customers from purchasing these items.
- 10.20 The restaurants featured on our tours will be local establishments. As far as possible, we will also introduce those which actively serve local food using local ingredients.
- 10.21 We will provide our guests with information on sustainable local transport options and encourage them to use public transportation.
- 10.22 We will encourage our guests to donate to local charities and sustainable initiatives. (Planned after recovery from business reduction due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic).

**<After trips>**

- 10.23 We will collect guest satisfaction data through questionnaires to help us improve our services.
- 10.24 We will include sustainability aspects, for example how well we as a company treat local people with respect and without discrimination, and how well waste is managed, in the questionnaires we ask our guests to complete in order to improve our services.
- 10.25 We will address customer complaints promptly and courteously in accordance with our Complaints Procedure.

