



# **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY/ SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

**committments  
& procedures**

**2025 - 2030**

## Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. The commitments of our CSR/ sustainability strategy.....	3
3. Running a self-optimizing sustainability management structure (SMS).....	4
4. Promising action for a sustainable business culture.....	5
4.a. Internal practices on Human rights & Social policy.....	5
4.b. Internal practices on Environmental protection.....	7
5. Promising action for a sustainable tourism supply chain.....	9
5.1. Transport Services.....	9
5.2. Accommodation Services.....	9
5.3. Excursions and other local activities.....	10
5.4. Tour leaders, local representatives and guides.....	11
5.5. Distribution partners/ agencies.....	11
5.6. Customers' relations.....	11
6. Promising action for support of the local communities.....	12
7. Afterword.....	14

### 1. Introduction

This is a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy of Berati Tours Albania (BTA), a follow up of the previous planning period of 2020 - 2025. During the last five years we had to realize that a business practice going for sustainability achievements is more demanding and time consuming than expected. Many of our self set goals were not hit and had to be reformulated. It goes without saying not everything is in your own hands when dealing with social processes; and a business is not an independent actor: also we had/ have to follow some rules of our specific market. It is largely a matter of putting a **sustainability management system (SMS)** into practical use, and optimizing monitoring & evaluation step by step.

Our experiences helped us to specify the self-understanding and profile of our business activities - finally putting even more emphasis on our sustainability road map. From the beginning we received fundamental orientation from **Travelife**, *“a leading training, management and certification initiative for tourism companies committed to reaching sustainability.”*

This sustainability policy provides a **strategic framework**, a medium-term planning tool for the next 5 years. It links **social responsibility commitments with promising actions** and gives orientation to the short term business and action planning of BTA where further focal points are set, measures are selected and regularly assessed, and finally re-evaluated with the help of our **internal quality management** (see 3. Sustainability Management System).

## 2. The commitments of our CSR/ sustainability strategy

*Berati Tours Albania (BTA) Sh.p.k. is a well-established Albanian tour operator for incoming travel services in Albania. We define the key role of BTA as incoming tour operator and travel agent for Albania and neighboring countries, because many places of this region have a promising economic potential through international tourism. With a small team and an extensive network of local partners we focus on sustainable forms of travel offering a win-win situation for both, the local hosts and our travel guests.*

**„Generate added value/ positive impact in favor of  
the local communities, our travel guests and us,  
but not at the expense of others“**

As incoming travel company & DMC who engage with various local and international stakeholders in tourism, namely transport companies, hotels and restaurants, tour guides, local attractions, other travel agencies and tour operators, and last not least the travel guests themselves, we see us in a **key role of influencing the sustainable development of tourism and hospitality in our place and region**. We aim to follow, implement and promote good sustainability practices to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts on tourism of our operations and to influence our clients and partners to do the same. We are **committed to promoting sustainability** in general.

We further subdivide our sustainability policy into **4 fields of interaction**. Each field consists of a set of principles and practical actions accordingly. Here we put together our **policy commitments**. After (in the following chapters 3. to 6.) we will define a number of positive actions related to each of them.

**1. Running a self-optimizing sustainability management structure (SMS):** We commit to sustainability management. We go for a realistic assessment of our impact, and for a self-optimizing learning process to improve our overall impact & sustainability.

**2. Sustainable business culture:** We comply with all national legislation, regulations and codes of practice. More specifically we commit to an internal business culture that practices human rights, fair and transparent working conditions, and having a clear social & health policy. We also commit to practice environmental protection by reducing energy and water consumption, minimizing air pollution; solid waste reduction & recycling policy; preferring the use of sustainable goods and services.

**3. Sustainable supply chain:** We try to achieve a tourism supply chain that is fully sustainable. We are strongly against harming wildlife and polluting the environment. We aim at safeguarding the authenticity of the communities and the natural environment. More specifically, related to the travel services we provide:

a) *Transport Services:* Travel without transport is hard to achieve, but the transport solution is an important aspect of sustainable tourism. We do our best to decrease the pollution level of all of our tourism related activities.

*b) Accommodation Services:* The partner accommodations play an key role, and have to be stimulated and motivated to adapt sustainable practices.

*c) Tour leaders, local representatives and guides:* in our programmes we give preference to the locals, offering them an opportunities of regular income.

*d) Excursions and other local activities:* We integrate activities with a low ecological footprint and safeguard the authenticity of the communities;

*e) Distribution partners/ agencies:* Our aim is to make business responsibility concrete to every partner within our business network, by selling sustainable products as well as by adopting sustainable business practices;

*f) Travellers' relations:* Traveller's safety and useful travel information about our destination are key for us. We ensure an ongoing communication process with our clients, prior to booking, while travelling and after the travel.

**4. Support of the local communities' interests:** We aim to maximize positive impact and minimize negative impact in our destination. We contribute to sustainable transformation in Albania by supporting Community Based Development projects.

### 3. Running a self-optimizing sustainability management structure (SMS)

A precondition of a strategy aiming towards sustainability is a functional SMS structure. In a first phase we established the basic elements of such a **QM system**:

- We have a **sustainability coordinator** responsible for sustainability aspects;
- We have our mid term **sustainability mission statement** and written **sustainability policy** and communicated it to our staff, suppliers, clients, etc;
- We have our short term **sustainability action plan** with concrete targets, actions, measures, responsibilities and time planning;
- We conducted a **baseline assessment of the company's performance** on "sustainability", but still in terms of minimizing negative impact;
- We ensure our company's transparency in sustainability by **public reporting** and communicating;

Now refinement & improvement is needed. We go for the following actions:

- **Measuring positive impact** - improve the monitoring and evaluation process for measuring the success of the sustainability policy, objectives and targets; M&E should also allow a wider understanding of the local transformation processes.
- **Identifying the sustainability performance of key suppliers and partners** by improved assessment;
- **Be actively involved in external forums and working groups** which are supportive to sustainability in tourism, locally and internationally;
- **Be actively involved in public information & debate on a local level (destination)** raising the voice for better forms of travel.

## 4. Promising action for a sustainable business culture

### 4.a. Internal practices on Human rights & Social policy

We comply with national legislation, regulations and codes of practice. More specifically we commit to **practice human rights, intergenerational & interethnic social justice** by the enforcement of following practices monitored on a regular basis:

- **We prohibit discriminations**, regard to recruitment, conditions of employment, access to training and senior positions, or promotion in terms of gender, race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion/beliefs or sexual orientation;
- We ensure all employees have an **equal chance and access to resources and opportunities** for personal development through regular training, education;
- We do not hinder trade union membership, collective labor negotiations and **representation of members by trade unions**; to comply with a (sector wide) collective labor condition negotiation structure;
- We provide **medical and liability insurance** according to the national law;
- We grant **just & transparent labour conditions** to our employees & service providers according to national labor law; working details are put down in a **written work contract**; this work contract includes, among others:
  - o a clear job description and a wage rate above the national legal minimum wage;
  - o fixed paid yearly holiday and sick leave and unpaid annual leave allowance (according to national law);
  - o the freedom of employment and contract termination with notice (minimum 2 monthes) and without penalty;
  - o compensation of overtime working hours based on agreement;
  - o have a clear disciplinary procedure that is effectively communicated with employees (according to national law);
- All employees can voice out their complaints and expectations; we **measure employee satisfaction** on a regular basis (team talk/ personal talk);
- We encourage employment opportunities for persons with special needs, and we create opportunities for students in participating in **traineeship/ internship**;
- We have **health and safety policy** for employees which complies to national legal standards; more specifically...
  - o We provide periodic guidance and training for employees regarding health and safety issues; this also includes fire and relevant natural disasters;
  - o We have first aid sets available at relevant locations and trained staff;
- **Anti-corruption:** Our employees will not offer, promise or give, not request, agree to or accept undue pecuniary or other advantage to/from public officials or the employees of business partners.

#### 4.b. Internal practices on Environmental protection

We are committed for **environmental protection** by ensuring the following practices, if feasible at reasonable costs/ available; monitored on a regular basis:

- **Follow an active policy to reduce water consumption and pollution,**
  - Sustainable water sourcing, which does not adversely affect environmental flows, where this is feasible;
  - Install water saving equipment in toilets, re-use waste water, collect rainwater;
  - Minimize and substitute the use of harmful substances; proper storage, handling & disposal of chemicals; use lead-free and water based paints, inside & outside;
- **Active commitment to reduce energy consumption,**
  - Calculate & compensate CO2 emissions; compare different periods;
  - Purchase green energy and energy efficient lighting for all areas;
  - Switch off lights & equipment when not in use; considering automatic switch on/off system with timers or movement sensors; use energy saving modes;
  - Prefer low energy equipment when buying new items;
- **Implement practices to minimize air pollution,**
  - Reduce staff related travel and use more sustainable modes of transport; encourage staff to use public transport/ sustainable transport means financially;
  - Reduce transport related impacts by tele-work, tele/video meetings, work-at-home policies or other means;
  - Maintain well motorized company vehicles, to reduce emissions and energy use;
- **Implement a solid waste reduction and recycling policy:** actively reduce the amount of disposable and consumer goods used and separate materials which can be recycled and organize collection and proper disposal; for example by
  - Take measures to reduce the amount of packaging materials avoid non-recyclable or non-biodegradable package materials, if possible;
  - Reduce the amount of plastic bottle waste in office; properly dispose batteries;
  - Implement waste reducing methods when using ink and toner cartridges for printing and copying, whenever feasible;
  - Purchase products in bulk to reduce the packaging materials;
  - Go for a “paperless office” policy; set copy and printing machines by default to double-sided printing or other forms of paper saving modes;
  - Use cleaning materials which are non-hazardous, non-eutrophic and biodegradable and are certified with an eco-label;
  - Print brochures on environmentally friendly paper; partner with a printing company that works with a certified environmental management system,

- **We favor the purchase of sustainable goods and services**, office and catering supply, giveaways and merchandise, *if locally available at reasonable costs*;
- **Provide periodic guidance, training and/or information to all staff members with respect to internal environmental practices**, about their roles and responsibilities;

## 5. Promising action for a sustainable tourism supply chain

For our tourism activities we try to **achieve a tourism supply chain that is fully sustainable**, at first hand by development of own sustainable travel products, and from a more general perspective by ensuring the enforcement of the following practices:

### 5.1. Transport Services

- **Identify and offer the most sustainable travel solution** when selecting transport options *to/ from* and *in* the destination; taking into account price, comfort, and practical considerations;
- **No domestic/ short-haul flights!** Prefer sustainable shuttle transport.

### 5.2. Accommodation Services

- **Prefer accommodations locally owned and managed** and accommodations that employ members of the local community;
- **Clearly and actively communicate our sustainability objectives and requirements** regarding contracted and other relevant accommodations;
- **Let accommodations sign a sustainability addendum**; push to provide evidence (report) about their sustainability goals, strategies and practises, (e.g. by *sustainability inquiry*, or by including *sustainability clauses into contract*);
- **Preferrably select partner accommodations that comply with sustainability and quality standards**, have a signed sustainability contract (certificate), and/ or conduct CSR activities or are locally engaged;
- **Encourage accommodations to follow best practices/trainings on responsible tourism**, e.g. by offering incentives, and to become sustainably certified; giving preference to accommodations that work with internationally acknowledged (e.g. GSTC recognised) and/or Travelife certification;
- ...

- Ensure that through our accommodation supply chain, **the rights of children are respected and safeguarded** by;
  - Having a clause in contracts throughout the value chain stating a zero tolerance policy of sexual exploitation of children;
  - Training employees in children's rights, the prevention of sexual exploitation and how to report suspected cases;
  - Supporting, collaborating with, and engaging stakeholders in the prevention of sexual exploitation of children;
- **Work with accommodations and restaurants that incorporate elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage;** while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities;
- **Terminate cooperation in case of clear evidence that contracted accommodations jeopardize the provision of integrity of basic services** such as food, water, energy, healthcare, or soil to the neighbouring residents or companies.

### 5.3. Excursions and other local activities

- **NOT offer any excursions that harm humans, animals, plants, natural resources** such as water & energy or being socially/ culturally unacceptable;
- **NOT be involved with companies that harvest, consume, display, sell, or trade wildlife species, and not offering any excursions in which wildlife is held captive,** except for properly regulated activities in compliance with local, national, and international law;
- **Dress an inventory of the environmentally or culturally sensitive excursions** we offer and evaluate the impact in each case;
- **Communicate our sustainability objectives and requirements to contracted and other relevant excursion providers** (e.g. by *code of conduct, social media, meetings, ...*) to minimise negative visitor impact and maximize enjoyment;
- **Have skilled and/or locally specialized/ certified guides** to guide our guests in sensitive cultural sites, heritage sites, or ecologically sensitive destinations;
- **Advise guests on behaviour standards during excursions and activities** with a focus on respecting the local culture, nature, and environment;
- **Promote excursions and activities to our guests which directly involve and support local communities** by purchasing traditional crafts and local (food) production methods, or visiting social projects;
- **Promote excursions and activities to our guests which support local environment and biodiversity** such as visiting protected areas or environmental protection projects.



#### 5.4. Tour leaders, local representatives and guides

- **Prefer work with locals: tour leaders & guides**, local representatives, porters, drivers, cooks, and other local staff in case of equal ability; complying with applicable international, national, local laws and regulations;
- **Ensure that all employees and employed freelance by us have a written job contract** and fully understand the terms and conditions; payment at least equal to or above the legal minimum standard;
- **Ensure that our local employees are informed on relevant aspects of our sustainability policy** and comply with it (*inform e.g. by newsletters, references/ supplements to contracts, emails, or similar*);
- **Ensure our tour guides and locals under contract are qualified and trained regularly**; by offering our own training program with a special sustainable travel module, and with safety and human rights issues;
- **Have our local guides being promoters of sustainability** and inform travel guests on relevant sustainability matters in the destination.

#### 5.5. Distribution partners/ agencies

- **Preferably work with organisations who have a written sustainability statement in their business policy** and ready to establish a cooperation contract including key sustainability clauses;
- **Inform key partners about our sustainability policy and expect of them to comply with it**, because it is relevant for our customers; informing key partners on the Travelife tourism standards;
- **Suggest more ecologically sound cooperation practices**; raise awareness among key partners on sustainable consumption; minimize the ecologic footprint of the cooperation by working as paperless as possible;
- **Regularly evaluate the sustainability practices of our key partners** to ensure their practices are truly sustainable or improving; establish an internal ranking about the degree of sustainability of partner agents.

#### 5.6. Customers' relations

##### Prior to booking

- **Ensure we comply with the standards of the European consumers rights** in terms of clear, complete and accurate product and price information; our privacy policy and voluntary codes of conduct in marketing and advertising;
- **Provide information about our company including sustainability claims; information about the travel destination including sustainability aspects**, which is factually correct, balanced and complete;
- ...

- **Inform clients about the environmental impact of different transport options to reach the destination** (in case these are not included in the package), and to offer sustainable alternatives, where available;
- **Inform the customer about sustainable alternatives of local transport, accommodations, and excursions;** promoting certified services as the better option; combining several sustainable travel products in packages;

### While travelling

- **Provide practical travel information** (e.g. health, safety, other risks) to our guests as well as general info about local environment and culture;
- **Inform our guests about key sustainability aspects and issues in the destination** and give recommendations on how to make a positive contribution;
- **Keep a contact person and a telephone number permanently available for emergency situations;** train personnel and keep guidelines available, on how to deal with emergency situations;
- **Provide clients with documented guidelines and/or codes of conduct for sensitive excursions and activities,** to minimize negative visitor impact and maximize enjoyment;
- **Inform clients about applicable legislation concerning the purchasing, sales, import and export of historic or religious artefacts and articles** containing materials of threatened flora and/or fauna in the destination;
- **Encourage clients to donate** to local charity and sustainable initiatives;

### After the travel

- **Have clear procedures in case of complaints** from clients;
- **Measure systematically client satisfaction** and take into account the results, for service and product improvements; include sustainability as an integral part of our guests' satisfaction assessment (*questionnaire*);
- **Give our guests an opportunity to link back to the travel destination,** for ongoing social impact (info exchange, charity, or similar).

## 6. Promising action for support of the local communities

We aim to maximize positive impact and minimize negative impact not only for our travel offer, but also for our travel destination Albania in general. We aim to **contribute to a sustainable transformation in Albania** by supporting and/ or initiating community based projects; by raising awareness; doing networking. We believe in self-empowerment of the local communities towards better and sustainable living conditions. More concretely we aim at the following practices:

- **Develop our travel products & offers together with local community actors** having a positive effect towards local hospitality and sustainability;
- **Support networking efforts among locals in general**; more specifically initiatives strengthening relations between accommodations & local producers;
- **NOT promote souvenirs which contain threatened flora and fauna species as indicated in the CITES treaty and the IUCN 'Red List'**; or historic and archaeological artefacts (except as permitted by law);
- **Identify threats and activities with negative structural effects on a local community**, especially on its sensitive nature & culture (material, immaterial) values, properties and sites, and find locally grounded alternatives;
- **Anticipate legally based spatial planning, protected areas and heritage regulations**, and destination management strategies of local, regional and national authorities;
- **Impact local governments** (by uniting with other stakeholders) concerning sustainability, destination planning and management, the use of natural resources and socio-cultural issues;
- **Support destinations in establishing a destination management assessment system** allowing measurement of the overall sustainability progress of a travel destination, and evaluation of positive or negative structural effects of travel;

## 7. Afterword

Following a sustainability strategy, a company inevitably is acting politically, in the best sense of the word, because it actively takes care of political issues beyond mere „business making“. **It is not about “profit at all costs”,** but about socially and environmentally compatible business practices increasing the overall (social) benefit. Entrepreneurial freedom and the general public’s interest can go together!

A pure marketing strategy focuses on effectiveness and efficiency criteria to improve the quantitative operating result (sales/ profit), but the CSR strategy takes into account an extended target horizon for the orientation and evaluation of the entrepreneurial activity. **From an entrepreneurial point of view, such a strategy makes sense only if it gains - sooner or later - the appropriate recognition in politics and society!** For example through prices that better reflect the real social benefits or costs; through the promotion and support of politically desirable, responsible behavior; or through sensitive clients who are ready to accept higher prices for the additional „social value“ commitment.

*For any questions & remarks please contact our sustainability coordinator:*

**Martin Heusinger**

eMail: [info@berati-tours.com](mailto:info@berati-tours.com)

Website: <https://berati-tours.com>

Address: Rr. Ndre Mjeda, Pall. „Dorado“, Kat.1  
Kompleksi Magnet, Tirana, AL-1023

Phone: +355 69 523 26 08 (BTA office)

Tirana, 31.07.2025