

Sustainability policy of Romania Active



Purpose

Romania-Active is committed to sustainable practices. The purpose of this policy is to ensure all stakeholders involved (our team, guesthouses, guides, partner agencies, transportation companies, even guests themselves), set environmental and social standards by implementing and agreeing upon clear standardized sustainability requirements within their own business. Romania Active values indigenous heritage and supports local culture and production.

Scope

This policy applies to all segments and stakeholders of our business, from our coordinating and management team and partner agencies, to the guesthouses and drivers, and even to our clients who visit our country.

Our team, as well as our suppliers, are responsible for implementing the company's sustainability policy. All our suppliers, clients, and ultimately the Romania Active team itself will be impacted by the policy.

Sustainability management & legal compliance

Sustainability commitment

Our sustainability performance is highly important to us, especially because we are an ecotouristic organization committed to sustainable practice, and we encourage all our partners to adhere to this practice as well in order to create safer, more environmentally-friendly, and more pleasurable travel.

We will use the Travelife platform to report on our progress and will be very transparent with this report. We are committed to openly communicate with the public about our performance by means of the Travelife report every 2 years.

We comply with all applicable legal requirements and work to prevent incidents or conditions that might result in a violation of law.

For any complaints, we encourage our clients to contact us directly via email or telephone to explain the incident and from there we will take measures to resolve the issue within a maximum of 2 days. We also instruct all our suppliers on how to behave and communicate with the clients and how to help them solve issues on the ground in the case of any complaints that may arise. All stakeholders - employees, transportation companies, guides, guesthouses, partner agencies, and clients, are free to make an anonymous report about any occurrence via e-mail or telephone. We strongly encourage everyone we work with to do this.

Sustainability management & legal compliance

Romania-Active commits to continuous improvement of sustainability practices, including the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our sustainability policy.

Romania-Active follows all Romanian 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 strict Code of Conduct, including a zero-tolerance policy for corruption, bribery, forced labor and discrimination.

Internal management: social policy & human rights

Employees

- We recognize that our employees are the main contributors to delivering the best results in this organization. We take care that we have:
 - A safe and welcoming work environment
 - Fair contract and fair compensation
 - Training opportunities, including on sustainability, and how to speak to a diverse group of people
 - Legal compliance in all regards
- As is stated in section 5 in the *ILO*, every employee has the right to:
 - take part in the formation of a trade union
 - be a member of a trade union
- Human rights objectives:
 - Promote respect for racial diversity, human rights, with respect to our employees, suppliers, partners, and clients.
 - Address any social issues raised in an ethical and timely manner.
 - To promote a healthy and safe work environment for our collaborators, and to improve their skills in terms of tourism sustainability.
 - We aim to reduce our environmental impact by reducing our mixed waste (increase reusing, recycling, and where possible, composting)
 - Manage our environmental impacts related to the reduction of energy consumption, waste management, vehicle emissions, and protection of the flora and fauna of our activities.
 - Promote the environmental, cultural and historical conservation of the regions where we organize our tours.

Internal management: environment

Environmental management of office operations

- ♦ we are committed to keeping the direct footprint of our environmental impacts to a minimum via [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
 - Record all consumptions, including - water, electricity, gas, and estimate waste produced.
- ♦ **Sustainable Purchasing:**
 - Use of reusable cups, towels instead of disposable paper rolls, plastic reusable containers for food, metal cutlery and ceramic plates
 - Procure office supply that is as much as possible produced locally, seasonal, is fair trade, in bulk, with limited packaging, and sustainability certified.

- ♦ **Recommendations for specific products:**

- **Paper** – we buy recycled paper / environmentally certified paper / lower density (eg: 60gr)
- **tea** – we buy directly from producer and in bulk
- **Office supplies & uniforms** – we order only during tourist season (May - October) and in bulk.
- **Cleaning materials** – we buy natural products less harmful to our environment and train our housekeeping personnel to use eco-friendly cleaning techniques (using less water, refilling products purchased in bulk etc.)
- **Light-bulbs** – LED lights are the best option, look at their energy use (in Watt) and light production (in Lumen).

- **Energy Efficiency:**

- Energy saving measures are in place in all common areas - turning off lights, computers, air conditioning, printer, when not needed.
- Will need to train all staff members to practice energy-efficient measures: turn off the bathroom lights, use more natural light in the office area, turn off the printer when not in use, turn down heat when it gets too warm and no more than 23 degrees, turn off air-conditioner when it gets cool.
- Water saving measures are in place in all common areas and restrooms
- Waste is separated into the following categories: [plastic, organic, paper products, hazardous/e-waste glass, mixed waste] and is disposed of properly by the municipality.
- Screens are to go on stand-by after 20 minutes

- **Waste reduction:**

- We refill our soap bottle with organic/plant-based hand-soap
- We use scrap paper before recycling it
- We do not use any hazardous products at the office
- We only buy food with reusable packaging (cardboard)
- Avoid paper cups
- Any old furniture (old chairs) we donate away
- Encourage guests to bring their own refillable water bottles on tours
- Old electronic equipment (e.g. computers, laptops) we take to a licensed waste disposal centre
- We purchase in bulk (office materials)

- **Staff travel policy:**

- We encourage public transport to work or by bike - offer financial incentives to cover monthly public transport
- For business trips we permit airline travel, but with economy class, direct flights if possible, and travel lightly.
- Accommodations: We choose locally owned hotels as close as possible to the conference place.
- Employees are granted cash advance to use during the trips.
- We encourage our clients to travel by train to and from the airport. For large groups we provide transport with van from the airport.

Carbon management of office operations

- Encouraging employees to limit their carbon footprint by use of public modes of transport.

Land use

- The Romania-Active office is located in an urban area, and its guesthouses are located in rural areas, which abide by all local land use laws, respects local cultural and natural resources in our business operations, and favours sustainable architecture and design.

Wildlife

- Wildlife species are heavily protected by local legislation, and violation of this criterion is penalized by fines and/or incarceration.
- During the tours, the guides take care to point out the wild and protected species of the region, and ensure that no harm comes to them from tourism.
- Wildlife species are not harvested, consumed, displayed, sold, or traded, except as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilisation is sustainable and in compliance with local, national and international law.

General suppliers policy

- ♦ Romania-Active 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.
- ♦ Romania-Active prefers to work with partners that share the company's sustainability values. 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.
- ♦ Romania-Active 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 local providers in an equitable fashion and ensuring fair working conditions and wages.
- ♦ Whenever possible, Romania-Active prefers to select partner companies that comply with at least a national certification for sustainability.
- ♦ Romania-Active selects those guest houses that are actively engaged with sustainable values as the first choice.
- ♦ Romania-Active expects its suppliers to adhere to a Code of Conduct that includes the following responsible business practices:
 - Complying with all local, regional, national and international regulations
 - Respecting all human rights including labour rights, children's rights, and women's rights, and different ethnicities
 - 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

- Protecting the interests of the agency

Our complete supplier Code of Conduct is available here: [<https://www.romania-active.com/agency/conditions/>].

In case a supplier does something that does not honour our policies in any way or says something offensive or discriminatory; we will first have an open and fair discussion with them to determine whether their act was intentional or unintentional, and after that we give them a fair warning. If they repeat the behaviour we will seriously reconsider working with them in the future, and depending on the nature of the offence, likely end the contract.

- ♦ Romania-Active raises awareness amongst its suppliers to adopt sound social and environmental practices, and to minimize their carbon footprint.
- ♦ Romania-Active maintains open lines of communication with our suppliers and partners and encourages feedback from our stakeholders at any time and on any topic related to the tours themselves, any social issues encountered (e.g. discrimination), and particularly sustainability.
- ♦ All suppliers are instructed to report any non-compliant behaviour that they see in collaborators, in clients, back to Romania-Active. Also, if they consider that Romania-Active has violated any of their values in any way, or breached any agreements, they are encouraged to report this so that we can remedy the situation.

Inbound partner agencies

- ♦ Romania-Active only works with partner agencies that adhere to the company's Code of Conduct.
- ♦ In the entire process of developing and operating our travel packages, Romania-Active expects partner agencies to act in the best interests of the surrounding communities and environment as well as our guests.
- ♦ We work with partner agencies that have similar sustainability values to us, whose clients are looking for adventure travel in ecoturistic destinations. One of our partner agencies actually asked us to complete an international sustainability certification.

Transport

- ♦ Romania-Active only works with transport providers that adhere to the company's Code of Conduct.
- ♦ When selecting transport for guests and business related travel, Romania-Active, commits to choosing the most environmentally friendly options available for travelling to, from, and within the destination – taking into consideration distance, price, route, and comfort.
- ♦ The transport companies follow a code of conduct and best practices which we mutually agreed upon.
- ♦ Romania-Active has selected the most environmentally friendly transport options, including the following measures:

- Encouraging metro/bus and train transport for employees and clients, over car
- For private groups we organize van transfers to be able to transport as many people as possible in only one van.
- Cars are also used for private transfers
- Using appropriate vehicle sizes for group sizes and purchasing most efficient vehicles available - for private transport of groups - select size of car based on the amount of people and choose the most efficient one.

Accommodations

Preference is given to accommodations that are AER-certified (Eco Romania national certification), or internationally certified, however, since most accommodations are still in the process of becoming certified and only recently made aware of the importance of this, we secondly also choose accommodations that are self-evaluated, or evaluated by a second-party, and those that are known to meet our most important sustainability requirements.

- In the accommodation selection process, Romania-Active considers the sustainability practices of accommodation by taking into account their sustainability management and social and environmental footprint - what they do with their food waste, whether they recycle, how they restrict energy consumption, where they get the ingredients that they cook with.
- Romania-Active favours the selection of accommodations that respect and protect the land, and respect local culture, traditions and architecture.
- Most of our accommodations are small-sized guest houses owned and run by local people, with whom we have developed a very close relationship.
- One of our principal criterion to select a supplier is that they engage in socially responsible actions, are respectful and follow the traditions of the region where they activate, are friendly and open to our guests and respectful of their preferences and needs, care for the environment, and cook with locally sourced ingredients.
- We always promote local guides with knowledge of the region
- All our boat tours in the delta are in line with the sustainability criteria as established by the Danube Delta Reservation Association - boats do not go too close to the pelicans and other birds, do not turn the engine on in the highly protected channels.

If contracted accommodation has been found to jeopardize the integrity of and the local community's access to essential resources, essential services, access to livelihood, and access to important sites, Romania-Active reserves the right to terminate the contract without warning.

Activities & Excursions

- ♦ Romania-Active only works with excursion providers that adhere to the company's Code of Conduct.
- ♦ All excursions and activities are to respect local customs, traditions, cultural integrity, and natural resources.
- Romania-Active has clear Codes of Conduct in place for environmentally and culturally sensitive excursions offered, and are openly communicated to guests and implemented by the guides and all others involved on the tour.
- These include: favouring locally produced craft and cuisine, complying with regulations of protected areas,

giving preference to non-motorized vehicles, respect of animal welfare, supporting the local economy, making customers aware of culturally and environmentally sensitivities

Tour leaders, local representatives, and guides

- ♦ Romania-Active commits to hiring qualified local guides, drivers or other local staff, paying them living wages and providing safe and fair working conditions.
- ♦ Romania-Active makes sure that all guides are trained in the sustainable-related topics particular to a specific destination and how to speak to different diverse groups of people, as they are the intermediaries between our clients and the destination.
- Our guides are specifically trained and made aware of the importance of waste processing of the clients and guest houses, plant species that are prohibited to destroy, and they have to be well-informed regarding the protection of animal species in the area. They are also made aware by our team on the critical issue of sexual exploitation of children in tourism.

Destinations

Sustainable destinations

- ♦ Romania-Active prefers to work in Romanian destinations that have committed to sustainability as an integral part of community and destination development.
- ♦ Romania-Active aims to send visitors to secondary or lesser-known tourist areas to avoid overtourism (e.g. rural areas of Transylvania).
- ♦ Romania-Active does not support destinations that have a questionable human rights track record.
- ♦ Romania-Active operates mostly in rural areas in order to help sustain the local communities and their way of life, and to promote the lesser known and less touristic regions of the country.
- ♦
- In guided tours, the guide informs the guests about the history and local traditions of the regions, about the importance of the protection of fauna and flora, the do's and don'ts of the region, and also informs them where they can buy authentic souvenirs produced locally

Contribution to local communities / local economic network

- ♦ Romania-Active 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 and educating them about illegal/prohibited/forbidden souvenirs
 - Respecting and advocating for all human rights (i.e. children's rights, women's rights, labour rights, Roma ethnic group, etc.) as well as land rights.

We do not allow the purchase of souvenirs containing threatened flora and fauna species, any illegally obtained historic/archaeological artefacts, drugs or illegal substances, and abide by local and international laws in place to prevent this.

Environmental stewardship in destinations

- ♦ Romania-Active 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 behaviour - where to dispose food waste, proper etiquette when entering national park reserves, about certain local habits and traditions and how to communicate with the hosts in certain situations.

Customer communication and protection

Privacy

What we tell our customers:

- Your privacy and protection are important to us. Sensitive information is stored electronically within our database, secured and only accessible by accredited staff who follow strict privacy procedures. If any documents containing personal data are printed for internal purposes, they are kept in a filing system in our office that is only accessible by our most trusted employees. If documents are no longer applicable, they are deleted.

Marketing and communication

- Romania-Active 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 honour our explicit and implicit commitments and promises.
- We are anti-greenwashing and stand behind our sustainability claims 100%.
- We endeavour to be inclusive and transparent in our marketing, and to always take into account cultural, religious, and ethnic sensitivities.

Sustainability communication

- ♦ Customers are educated about the sustainable choices they can make, including transparent communication on:
 - Certified accommodations - hotels are required to meet certain sustainability requirements (there is an audit for this)
 - Activities and excursions that benefit the local communities: transport with horse-drawn carriage in the villages
 - Responsible shopping and illegal souvenirs - we inform guests about where they can buy locally produced and authentic souvenirs from legal markets
- ♦ Activities considered unacceptable:
 - Zoos

- Circuses
- Animal labour
- Animals in captivity
- Hunting excursions
- Safaris - no motorized offroad tours

Customer experience

- ♦ The company aims for all customer experiences to be positive, and follows strict health and safety, marketing, and excursion policies to ensure customer satisfaction. These policies cover specific topics of (but not limited to):
 - Health and safety - we must inform clients of potential bears and shepherd dog dangers on the walking routes and offer ultrasonic dog devices and bear sprays if clients request. We must inform clients of this potential danger.
 - Emergency procedures - in case clients are bitten by aggressive dogs, then an immediate transfer to the hospital must be arranged to get vaccine shots.
 - Privacy
 - Group numbers
 - Greenhouse Gas emissions and offsetting
 - Transport: Advise clients to use train and other public modes of transport. This is included in the roadbook we send them.
 - Shopping
 - Sexual exploitation
 - Children in tourism
 - Satisfaction and complaints
 - Racial discrimination
- **Complaints Policy:**
- *Romania-Active maintains open lines of communication with our customers and encourages feedback at any time and on any topic, particularly sustainability and any social issues important to them that they may encounter.*
 - We acknowledge – within 1 business day of receiving your complaint we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint.
 - We review – we undertake an initial review of your complaint and determine what if any additional information or documentation may be required to complete an investigation. We may need to contact you to clarify details or request additional information where necessary.
 - We investigate – within 3 business days of receiving your complaint we will investigate your complaint objectively and impartially, by considering the information you have provided us, our

actions in relation to your dealings with us and any other information that could assist us in investigating your complaint.

- We respond – Following our investigation we will notify you of our findings and any actions we may have taken in regards to your complaint.
- We take action – where appropriate we amend our business practices or policies.
- We record – we will record your complaint for continuous improvement process and monitoring through regular review, your personal information will be recorded in accordance with relevant privacy legislation.

Contact / Responsible person

The implementation of this policy will be lead by the Sustainability Coordinator, Diana Vlad, who can be reached at dianavlad93@hotmail.com or info@romania-active.com.

Definitions

Ecotourism is now defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education” (TIES, 2015).

Effective date

This policy is effective from November 25th, 2024.

Revision history

This policy was first written 10th September 2024 by
the sustainability coordinator.

This policy was revised October 3rd 2025

This policy will be revised October 31st 2026.

Founder and owner of Romania Active: Raluca Teodor

