
Baltic Blues Travel Sustainability Policy

Baltic Blues Travel is committed to minimizing its environmental impact and bringing sustainability practices to its tourism activities in the Baltic States. The purpose of this policy is to establish the main principles of sustainable tourism that will be integrated in its business. This policy applies to all employees and suppliers involved in company's business activities, such as accommodation, transport companies and travel guide. It also applies to our customers – outgoing B2B tour operators. Staff, suppliers, and partners are expected to fully uphold objectives under this policy whenever possible.

1. Sustainability management & legal compliance

Sustainability commitment

Baltic Blues Travel's leadership is wholly committed to the company's sustainability performance and endorses the company's sustainability mission statement and policy.

We will use the Travelife platform to report on our sustainability progress and to monitor and evaluate progress. We are committed to communicating our sustainability performance by means of the Travelife report every two years.

Sustainability management & legal compliance

Baltic Blues Travel commits to continuous improvement of sustainability practices, including the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our sustainability policy, with dedicated personnel and resources to achieve our sustainability goals.

Baltic Blues Travel follows all local, national, and international regulations as they relate to human resources, human rights, children's rights, land rights, environmental management, wildlife, and land use.

Baltic Blues Travel is committed to a zero-tolerance policy for acts of bribery, corruption, discrimination, and violation of human rights, including forced labour, human trafficking, and all rights of children.

2. Internal management: social policy & human rights

Employees

- Baltic Blues Travel supports both career-related and job-related professional development activities.
- Baltic Blues Travel is committed to the principle of fair and transparent pay for work for all its employees, regardless of gender/sex, race, national origin, marital status, age, religion.

- Baltic Blues Travel is committed to fostering a safe, healthy, and inclusive work culture where all employees can perform their duties and to recognise their potential.

3. Internal management: environment

Environmental management of office operations

Baltic Blues Travel has teleworking paperless office where all employees work remotely, have only scheduled meetings and all communications are done via intranet.

It is our goal to assure the environmental integrity of our processes in employees home offices taking an example of home office of sustainability manager:

- Continuously seek opportunities to improve our environmental performance by establishing objectives and targets and reporting our results.
- Practising a waste hierarchical approach to always reduce, reuse, and recycle commodities and products.
- Promoting participation amongst our employees and soliciting input from them to better achieve our environmental goals.
- Minimising pollution including light and any soil, water, or air contaminants, and avoiding use of any toxic or hazardous substances.

4. General suppliers' policy

- Baltic Blues Travel 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.
- Baltic Blues Travel prefers to work with partners that share the company's commitment towards sustainability. We require suppliers to get acquainted with our Sustainability Policy and to comply with the Suppliers Code of Conduct.
- Baltic Blues Travel 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 locally by providing fair working conditions.
- Whenever possible, Baltic Blues Travel prefers to select partner companies that comply with tourism-specific, internationally recognized certifications or other sustainability certifications like ISO.
- Baltic Blues Travel 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
 - Committing to fair employment conditions
 - Following anti-corruption, anti-bribery, anti-extortion, and anti-discrimination laws
 - Protecting children from exploitation through tourism
 - Protecting the environment and natural resources

- Acting in the best interest of local communities
- Protecting the interests of Baltic Blues Travel
- Following a zero-tolerance policy, Baltic Blues Travel will immediately terminate any relationships with suppliers that violate our policies, specifically through acts of bribery, corruption, discrimination, and violation of human rights.
- Baltic Blues Travel actively collaborates with suppliers to improve their sustainability performance. We encourage our suppliers to continuously learn about sustainability and support this learning whenever possible.
- Baltic Blues Travel maintains open lines of communication with our suppliers and partners and encourage feedback at any time and on any topic, particularly sustainability.

4.1.Transport

- Baltic Blues Travel does not own any coaches and works with coach companies that provide services for ground transportation for distances up to 1500 km per tour. It composes 95% of our transport services.
 - Baltic Blues Travel prioritizes locally own travel companies.
 - Baltic Blues Travel only works with transport providers that adhere to the Transport Code of Conduct that is a part of the Suppliers Code of Conduct.
 - When selecting transport for travellers, Baltic Blues Travel 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.
 - Baltic Blues Travel selects the most environmentally friendly transport options, including the following measures:
 - Employ coaches that comply with EURO 6 or higher standards of Co2 emission
 - Offer rail-and-fly transport to and from the airport as an option
 - Use public transportation options in the destinations as an option
 - Use appropriate vehicle for different group sizes and purchasing most efficient vehicles available. Most of our groups are small groups up to 16 pax. In the past if a group reached a size of 12-16 pax, we used medium size buses with 30 seats and consumption of 25-30 lt/100 km. Today we aim to change such vehicles to minibuses with a luggage trailer that consumes 12 lt/100 km in total. It will help us to reduce the emission by 50-58%.
- By January 2027 we plan to use such minibuses for 75% of all our small groups up to 16 pax.
- Training drivers on eco-driving techniques, i.e. reduction of fuel consumption, installing bins for waste recycling and providing water re-fill equipment instead of plastic single use bottles. To do so, sustainability guidelines will be developed and given to the drivers by the tour guides and transport companies.
 - Baltic Blues Travel will calculate carbon footprint of 50% of our tours and will consult our customers (outgoing B2B tour operators) on how to make accurate carbon footprint calculations for our products.

- Baltic Blues Travel owns a park of 100 bicycles that are used for our cycling tours. These bicycles are kept clean in good conditions and have necessary technical check-ups to prolong their life span.

4.2. Accommodations

- Baltic Blues Travel only works with hotels that adhere to the Suppliers' Code of Conduct.
- Our company has developed a set of criteria to prioritize hotels by considering their sustainability certification and social and environmental footprint. The top priority is given to the hotels with the sustainability certifications, i.e., Green Key.

4.3 Activities & Excursions

- All activities and excursions of Baltic Blues Travel are arranged directly by the company and done by outsourced tourist guides and tour leaders. Company does not provide excursions offered by the third parties. 4/5 of all activities/excursions are city tours and museums visits, the rest are walking and cycling tours.
- We try to design our excursions and activities in the way that would minimize the use of private couches and when possible have more walking tours.
- All excursions and activities run by Baltic Blues Travel respect local customs, religious practices and natural resources.
- Baltic Blues Travel commits to not offering any excursions that harm humans, wildlife, environment, or natural resources such as water and energy.
- Baltic Blues Travel gives preference to excursions and activities that benefit local communities and support environmental protection.
- Baltic Blues Travel has clear Codes of Conduct in place for city tours/cultural excursions and nature visits offered by the company.
- 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.

4.3. Tour leaders, local representatives, and guides

- Baltic Blues Travel commits to hiring qualified local guides and tour leaders, paying them living wages and providing safe and fair working conditions.
- All local tour guides have certificates issued after completing the required training course.
- Baltic Blues Travel understands that guides are the intermediaries between the guests and the socio-cultural and environmental context of the destination, conveying the appropriate behaviour to them. Therefore, we make sure that the guides hired by or leading tours on behalf of Baltic Blues Travel are knowledgeable in the sustainability topics of the destination.

- Baltic Blues Travel requests all tour guides and tour leaders to read and confirm implementation of the Code of Conduct developed by the company. This code includes avoiding the use of disposable plastic bottles, indicating sources of drinkable water, showing available waste bins with recycling options, following marked paths in nature spots, protection of endangered local flora and fauna, respectful behaviour in sacred sites, advise on locally owned authentic restaurants and souvenirs and other ways to support local communities.
- Baltic Blues Travel provides guides with learning opportunities on sustainability topics and provide free access to the Travelife online learning platform.
- Since 2022 all tour related information (vouchers, schedule, guidelines) is provided via portal for tour guides created by Baltic Blues Travel. We encourage all tour leaders, hotels, and museums to stop using paper vouchers. Managers are allowed to give printed materials to tour guides only in exceptional cases. It is aligned with paperless principles of documenting and communication principles in Baltic Blues Travel.

4.5.Destinations

Sustainable destinations

- Baltic Blues Travel operates in the 3 Baltic States - Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. We work with destinations that have committed to sustainability as an integral part of the destination development.
- Baltic Blues Travel aims to bring travellers to outside the capitals, to lesser-known tourist areas to avoid over tourism.

Contribution to local communities / local economic network

- Baltic Blues Travel commits to positive contribution to the destinations in which we operate, by sourcing locally and responsibly and encouraging travellers to shop responsibly, supporting local arts and economies.

Environmental stewardship in destinations

- Baltic Blues Travel commits to environmental stewardship in the destinations in which we operate by:
 - Ensuring natural resources remain intact;
 - Educating guests about the principles of responsible visitor behaviour. Our main representatives in the destinations are tour guides who have received necessary education and are requested to follow the Code of Conducts developed by Baltic Blues Travel. They instruct and later monitor sustainable behaviour of tourists coming to the destinations.

5. Customer communication and protection

5.1. Data protection

Baltic Blues Travel keeps strictly private and confidential all information, documentation, and prices of our services as disclosed by and to the customers (outgoing B2B tour operators).

Additionally, we receive rooming lists for the hotels with travellers' names, the year of birth and the citizenship; this information is stored and secured by the company's intranet and only accessible by our trusted employees.

We are committed to protecting the privacy of all our customers, and ensure that all information is kept strictly private and confidential.

5.2. Marketing and communication

- Baltic Blues Travel customers are outgoing B2B tour operators.
- Baltic Blues Travel strives to be always truthful in all situations. We offer products and services that do what we claim in our communications.
- We are anti-greenwashing and stand behind our sustainability claims 100%.

5.3. Sustainability communication

- Customers are informed about the social and environmental impact of the tours, including certified accommodations, calculations of carbon footprint of their tours, as well as activities and excursions that benefit the local communities and environmental protection.
- Customers are informed about sustainable choices and alternatives for different components of their tours. Baltic Blues Travel staff is qualified to offer such options.

5.4. Customer experience

- The company aims for all customer experiences to be positive and follows health and safety policies to ensure customer satisfaction.
- Baltic Blues Travel measures traveller's satisfaction using tour leaders as the main direct contact with the tourists. To do so company requests tour leaders to fill in the questionnaire and evaluate quality of the services and group satisfaction. Our next step is to include sustainability issues into this evaluation form.
- Baltic Blues Travel maintains open lines of communication with our customers and encourages feedback at any time and on any topic, particularly sustainability.