



# HIDDEN ADRIATIC Sustainability Policy

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Date of approval: March 2025

## PURPOSE

Hidden Adriatic is committed to promoting sustainable and responsible travel by minimizing our environmental impact, supporting local communities, and preserving cultural and natural heritage.

The purpose of this policy is to integrate sustainability into our business practices by reducing waste, promoting ecofriendly transportation, and collaborating with ethical suppliers. Through these efforts, we aim to create meaningful travel experiences that benefit both travelers and destinations while ensuring long-term sustainability.

## SCOPE

This sustainability policy applies to all employees, partners, and stakeholders involved in Hidden Adriatic's travel operations. It guides decision-making across all departments, including itinerary planning, supplier selection, customer engagement, and office management.

The policy will be implemented by the management team and sustainability coordinator, with active participation from all employees. It also extends to our suppliers, contractors, and business partners, encouraging them to align with our sustainability values.

This policy does not cover independent third-party services booked outside of our agency's offerings or aspects of travel beyond our direct influence, such as government regulations or personal choices made by travelers outside our recommendations.

Goran Jokic is the Company's sustainability coordinator and is responsible for implementing the company's sustainability policy.

## SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT & LEGAL COMPLIANCE

### Sustainability commitment

Hidden Adriatic's leadership is fully dedicated to enhancing the company's sustainability efforts and fully supports its sustainability mission and policy.

We will utilize the Travelife platform to track, assess, and report on our sustainability progress. Additionally, we are committed to transparently sharing our sustainability performance through the Travelife report every two years.

### Sustainability management & legal compliance

Hidden Adriatic is committed to the continuous enhancement of its sustainability practices, ensuring ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our sustainability policy. We allocate dedicated personnel and resources to effectively achieve our sustainability goals.

We adhere to all applicable local, regional, national, and international regulations concerning human resources, human rights, children's rights, land rights, environmental management, wildlife, and land use. Our strict Code of Ethics upholds a zero-tolerance policy for corruption, bribery, forced labor, and discrimination.

## INTERNAL MANAGEMENT: SOCIAL POLICY & HUMAN RIGHTS

At Hidden Adriatic, we value our employees as the foundation of delivering impactful and sustainable travel experiences. To support them, we uphold a strong human resource policy that ensures:

- Full compliance with labor laws and ethical standards
- A safe, welcoming, and inclusive workplace culture
- Fair employment terms, including competitive wages and benefits
- Access to training, with a focus on sustainability and professional development
- Active employee involvement in sustainability initiatives and decision-making
- Equal opportunities in pay, career advancement, and workplace benefits

## INTERNAL MANAGEMENT: ENVIRONMENT

### Environmental management of office operations

At Hidden Adriatic, we are committed to reducing our environmental impact by embedding sustainable practices in all aspects of our operations. Our policy is to ensure the environmental integrity of our office practices through:

- **Energy Efficiency:** Employees are instructed to follow a Switch-Off Policy, turning off electrical devices, including computers, lights, and appliances, when not in use. Air conditioning units must be set to energy-efficient temperatures, and equipment should be turned off when the office is unoccupied.
- **Energy-Efficient Equipment:** We prioritize purchasing equipment that meets energy efficiency criteria, including ENERGY STAR-certified devices, and we select suppliers that demonstrate sustainable manufacturing practices.
- **Water Conservation:** Employees are encouraged to adopt water-saving practices, such as using water efficient appliances, minimizing water waste during household tasks, and promoting water-efficient office equipment. As part of our broader environmental sustainability goals, we have outlined the following water reduction guidelines for our employees:
  1. **Minimizing Water Use at Home.** Employees are encouraged to adopt water-saving practices in their daily routines, including:
    - **Efficient Watering:** Use water-efficient methods for gardening or outdoor maintenance, such as drip irrigation systems, and water plants early in the morning or late in the evening to minimize evaporation.
    - **Conserve Water During Household Tasks:** Reduce water usage during activities such as washing dishes, doing laundry, and taking showers by ensuring full loads are washed and using low-flow faucets and showerheads.
  2. **Water-Efficient Appliances.** Employees are encouraged to use water-efficient appliances where possible:
    - **Dishwashers and Washing Machines:** Use energy-efficient appliances that consume less water per cycle. When washing dishes or clothes manually, employees should aim to limit water waste by filling the sink or buckets and turning off taps when not in use.
    - **Low-Flow Fixtures:** Employees should consider using low-flow toilets, faucets, and showerheads in their homes to reduce water consumption.
    - **Use Water-Saving Equipment:** Any office equipment, such as coffee machines or other appliances that use water, should be operated efficiently, and employees should avoid overfilling or running equipment unnecessarily.
- **Waste Reduction & Recycling:** Our company is committed to reducing solid waste and promoting recycling through sustainable practices. We have implemented a policy to minimize non-reusable or non-recyclable waste. We prioritize reducing waste by encouraging practices such as double-sided printing, not using plastic or paper cups (working from home, so not portable cups not necessary), and bulk purchasing whenever possible (small company doesn't have big needs) to minimize packaging waste. We actively support recycling

efforts within our homes by providing clear guidelines for sorting recyclable materials and ensuring proper disposal.

- **Reducing Disposable Goods:** We actively seek to reduce the use of disposable and consumable goods, promoting digital alternatives and reusing materials whenever possible.
- **Sustainable Purchasing:** We are committed to supporting sustainability through responsible and ethical purchasing practices. Our purchasing policy prioritizes suppliers and products that align with our sustainability goals, whenever feasible and of sufficient quality. We aim to:
  - Favor sustainable suppliers: We seek out vendors who demonstrate a commitment to environmental stewardship, fair labor practices, and ethical business operations.
  - Choose environmentally responsible products: We prioritize products made from renewable, recycled, or non-toxic materials, with minimal environmental impact throughout their lifecycle.
  - Ensure quality standards: While sustainability is a core consideration, we also ensure that products meet or exceed our company's quality and performance standards.

By adhering to these guidelines, we aim to minimize our environmental footprint while promoting a culture of sustainability within our company and beyond.

## Carbon management of office operations

Hidden Adriatic is dedicated to minimizing our carbon footprint and actively works to reduce our travel-related emissions. Our commitment includes:

- Remote working. We do not work in the office.
- Reducing travel whenever possible, prioritizing alternatives such as virtual meetings.
- Installing energy-efficient equipment and appliances whenever possible to further reduce our environmental impact.

By taking these steps, we strive to continuously reduce our carbon emissions and promote a sustainable work environment.

## GENERAL SUPPLIER POLICY

Hidden Adriatic is committed to sourcing products and services responsibly, striving to minimize negative impacts on society, culture, and the environment. We expect our suppliers to share this commitment and engage in sustainable practices.

Hidden Adriatic prefers to partner with businesses that have a clear commitment to sustainability. We prioritize suppliers that have a written sustainability statement integrated into their business policies or a defined sustainability policy in place.

We favor working with suppliers based in the destinations we serve, particularly those that are locally owned or managed, use local and seasonal products and services, and provide equitable employment opportunities while supporting fair working conditions.

Whenever possible, Hidden Adriatic selects suppliers that hold internationally recognized sustainability certifications, such as Travelife, GSTC-accredited tourism certifications, or ISO standards.

Hidden Adriatic expects all suppliers to adhere to a Code of Ethics that includes responsible business practices, such as:

- Compliance with all applicable local, regional, national, and international regulations
- Respect for human rights, including labor rights, children's rights, and women's rights
- Commitment to fair employment conditions
- Adherence to anti-corruption, anti-bribery, anti-extortion, and anti-discrimination policies
- Protection of children from sexual exploitation in tourism
- Protection of the environment and natural resources
- Acting in the best interests of local communities
- Protecting the interests of Hidden Adriatic

In line with our zero-tolerance policy, Hidden Adriatic will immediately terminate any supplier relationships that violate our policies or Code of Ethics, particularly in cases of bribery, corruption, discrimination, or human rights violations.

We encourage our suppliers to adopt socially and environmentally responsible practices and to minimize their carbon footprint. Hidden Adriatic actively collaborates with suppliers to enhance their sustainability efforts and supports continuous learning about sustainability.

We maintain open communication with our suppliers and partners, actively seeking feedback from stakeholders on sustainability-related topics and practices.

## Transport

Hidden Adriatic only partners with transport providers that fully adhere to the company's Code of Ethics. When selecting transportation for guests and business-related travel, Hidden Adriatic is committed to prioritizing the most environmentally friendly options available, considering factors such as distance, cost, route, and comfort.

The guidelines we use when choosing the most eco-friendly options include:

- Preferring ground transportation over air travel for short-haul destinations
- Minimizing in-destination flights whenever possible
- Offering rail-and-fly transport options to and from airports when possible
- Utilizing public transportation in the destinations we serve whenever possible
- Choosing appropriately sized vehicles for group travel and opting for the most efficient vehicles available

## Accommodation

Hidden Adriatic only partners with accommodations that fully comply with the company's Code of Ethics.

In the accommodation selection process, Hidden Adriatic evaluates the sustainability practices of each property, considering their sustainability management, as well as their social and environmental impact. We prioritize smaller, locally owned accommodations that respect and protect land use and those that thoughtfully showcase local architecture, customs, and traditions.

## Activities & Excursions

Hidden Adriatic only collaborates with excursion providers that fully adhere to the company's Code of Ethics.

All excursions and activities organized by or on behalf of Hidden Adriatic respect local customs, traditions, cultural integrity, and natural resources.

We are committed to offering only those excursions that do not harm humans, wildlife, the environment, or natural resources such as water and energy.

Hidden Adriatic gives preference to excursions and activities that benefit local communities, respect animal welfare, and contribute to environmental protection.

## Tour leaders, local representatives, and guides

1. **Preference for Local Employment:** We give priority to hiring local tour leaders, representatives, and guides who are familiar with the destination and its culture. This practice not only supports the local economy but also contributes to a more authentic and sustainable travel experience for our customers.
2. **Relevant Qualifications and Expertise:** All guides recruited must possess the necessary qualifications and expertise for the type of tour they are leading, as required by local regulations. This ensures that customers receive safe, informative, and enriching experiences.
3. **Licensed and Credentialed Guides:** We recruit licensed guides who have met the legal requirements of the destination.
4. **Legal Compliance and Employment Documentation:** All guides are required to meet the legal minimum age to work in the tourism industry.

We prioritize the employment of local tour leaders, representatives, and guides to support the local economy and reduce the environmental impact associated with long-distance travel. In doing so, we ensure that the following principles are respected:

5. **Ethical Behavior and Customer Care:** Guides are fully informed about appropriate professional conduct when interacting with customers. The company investigates any claims or suspicions of inappropriate behavior towards clients and implements a disciplinary procedure when necessary to maintain a safe and respectful environment for both guests and guides.

## Contribution to local communities / local economic network

Hidden Adriatic is committed to making a positive contribution to the destinations in which we operate by:

- Sourcing products and services locally and responsibly, while supporting traditional arts and culture
- Encouraging guests to shop responsibly and educating them about illegal, prohibited, or harmful souvenirs
- Collaborating with local tourism stakeholders, including local government, businesses, academia, and community groups, to promote sustainable tourism development in the destination
- Respecting and advocating for all human rights, including children's rights, women's rights, labor rights, and land rights.

## Environmental stewardship in destinations

Hidden Adriatic is committed to environmental stewardship in the destinations in which we operate by:

- Ensuring that natural resources are preserved and remain intact
- Educating guests about the principles of responsible travel and promoting responsible visitor behavior.

## CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION AND PROTECTION

### Privacy

Customer protection is our priority. Therefore, we maintain a clear privacy policy [<https://hiddenadriatic.com/privacy-policy/>] to ensure:

- Legal compliance in all regards
- Customers and their data are protected
- Customers know how their information is being used

### Marketing and communication

- Hidden Adriatic is committed to honesty and transparency in all aspects of our operations. We ensure that the products and services we offer align with the claims made in our communications.
- We uphold both our explicit and implicit commitments and promises.
- We are firmly against greenwashing and fully support our sustainability claims.
- We strive to be inclusive and representative in our marketing, always considering cultural, religious, and ethnic sensitivities.

### Sustainability communication

Hidden Adriatic ensures that customers are informed about the social and environmental aspects of their journey and are encouraged to make sustainable choices. This includes providing information on:

- Sustainable accommodation options
- Efforts to reduce and offset travel-related environmental impact
- Activities and excursions that support local communities and environmental conservation
- Responsible shopping practices

## CONTACT / RESPONSIBLE PERSON

All staff are responsible for the ownership and undertaking of this policy.

All staff are responsible for the promotion and implementation of this sustainability policy within their departments.

The implementation of this policy will be led by the Sustainability Coordinator, Goran Jokic, who can be reached at [goran@hidden-adriatic.com](mailto:goran@hidden-adriatic.com).

## EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective from 20.03.2025.