

Responsible Tourism Policy



Version 2 - updated January 2016

Ayana
journeys

Introduction

At Ayana Journeys, we whole heartedly believe in the power of travel to educate and influence travellers, provide opportunities for conservation, and the potential to have a positive impact on host communities.

We seek to meet and exceed international standards set for responsible tourism, as well as focus on destination or culturally specific issues to make our trips as socially responsible as we can, maximising the positive impact we can have in the places we visit and work in. To do this, our Responsible Tourism Policy transparently outlines ways in which we align ourselves with the UNWTO's Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria.



Responsible travel is at the heart of everything that we do. Our core values:

- Ethical, engaging travel that facilitates genuine connections and learning opportunities
- Using responsible travel to promote and support grass-roots community projects
- Using travel to inspire a generation of global citizens who feel compassionate towards fellow human beings

Ayana Journeys: Commitment & Targets

Effective sustainability planning

GSTC Criteria	Ayana Journeys Commitment	Ayana Journeys Targets
A1 The organisation has implemented a long term sustainability management system that is suitable to its reality and scope, and which addresses environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, health and safety issues.	Our 3 year business plan includes objectives to initiate specialty tours that support partnerships in cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, wildlife conservation, and community benefits. All our tours educate travellers about these themes, especially our educational tours for student groups. As part of our HR policy and staff benefits program, our guides must undergo first aid training.	
A2 The organisation is in compliance with all applicable local to international legislation and regulations (including, among others, health, safety, labour and environmental aspects).	Ayana Journeys is registered as a business in the Kingdom of Cambodia (Co. 3431 E/2014). Our HR policy complies with the Cambodia Labour Law (1997).	Seek to influence supply chain by ensuring they also adhere to these laws (improved duty of care).
A3 All personnel receive periodic guidance and training regarding their roles and responsibilities with respect to environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, health and safety issues.	As part of our HR policy and employee benefits, our staff have access to regular training, including specialty sessions in first aid and quality service. As part of our staff induction, all team members undergo responsible tourism training (environmental, social, and cultural).	When expanding into rural communities, influence wider community by providing responsible tourism training.
A4 Customer satisfaction, including sustainability aspects, is measured and corrective action taken.	All customers are given a feedback form to complete at the end of their tour, and this information is saved in a database and reviewed on a quarterly basis (unless urgent suggestions are given).	

GSTC Criteria	Ayana Journeys Commitment	Ayana Journeys Targets
A5 Promotional materials are accurate and complete with regard to the organisation and its products and services, including sustainability claims. They do not promise more than is being delivered.	All our communications materials are transparent about our approach to responsible travel, and we aim to influence others by sharing our experiences and style of travel.	Our company aims to create partnerships between grassroots projects and tourism. Through our support, we hope to share the correct information of these projects through our own channels. Continue to provide this platform on a rolling basis.
A6 Planning, design, construction, renovation, operation and demolition of buildings and infrastructure... comply with zoning requirements and with laws related to protected areas and heritage consideration.	N/A	
A.6.2 ...respect the natural and cultural heritage surroundings in planning, siting, design and impact assessment.	N/A (But our office is in a beautiful renovated colonial building in the heart of Siem Reap!)	
A.6.3 ...use locally appropriate sustainable practices and materials.	N/A	
A.6.4 ...provide access for persons with special needs, where appropriate.	N/A	
A7 Land and water rights, and property acquisition are legal, comply with local communal and indigenous rights, including their free, prior and informed consent, and do not require involuntary resettlement.	N/A (But whenever we use accommodation providers etc, we have developed a supplier checklist which includes these points)	

We are proud of...

- Transparent reporting of how we work responsibly + why
- We pay careful attention to what legislation we should follow + have good duty of care to do business 'right'
- Good training policies for our staff

We want to improve...

- We want to enhance our sphere of influence by training stakeholders in our values
- Support projects we support by improving their communications materials

Maximising social and economic benefits for the local community

GSTC Criteria	Ayana Journeys Commitment	Ayana Journeys Targets
<p>B1 The organisation actively supports initiatives for local infrastructure and social community development including, among others, education, training, health and sanitation.</p>	<p>The entire integrity of our business is founded on these principles! Our tours support as much as possible social businesses, NGOs and other initiatives that support local development or environmental or cultural preservation. Our education tours provide direct funding to an educational NGO (PEPY Empowering Youth) that provides scholarships to rural students to pursue further education. Other tours also include donations to these types of organisations/projects we visit.</p>	
<p>B3 Local services and goods are purchased and offered by the organisation, following fair-trade principles.</p>	<p>Generous contributions are always given to organisations we visit, and services we purchase. As much as possible, we use local goods and products.</p>	
<p>B4 The organisation offers the means for local small entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products that are based on the area's nature, history and culture (including food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.).</p>	<p>Our tours seek to provide a sense of place, so we always use local services (e.g. eat at local restaurants, stay at locally owned guesthouses, support local enterprises).</p>	
<p>B5 A documented code of conduct for activities in indigenous and local communities has been developed and implemented with the collaboration and consent of the affected community.</p>	<p>Our Know Before You Go (pre-departure) document includes cultural etiquette suggestions established by local experts with a deep understanding of Cambodia. As we develop tours in rural communities, we plan to establish codes of conduct based on destination specific issues and requests.</p>	
<p>B6 The organisation has implemented a policy against commercial, sexual or any other form of exploitation and harassment, particularly of children, adolescents, women and minorities.</p>	<p>We are Child Safe certified (all staff trained); we distribute this information to all guests travelling with us and share it on our website (7 Tips for Travellers). This is a destination specific campaign tackling local issues in the exploitation of children. All our staff are also trained on exploitation.</p>	

GSTC Criteria	Ayana Journeys Commitment	Ayana Journeys Targets
B7 The organisation offers equal employment opportunities to women, local minorities and others, including in management positions, while restraining child labour.	Of our core staff, 75% is currently female. We hope to initiate projects to specifically support women and indigenous communities by providing opportunities through tourism. We are an equal opportunities business.	Our expatriate management to Khmer expatriate is 70:30 (voting power percentage). As we expand and become more established, we certainly hope to provide career advancement opportunities to our Khmer staff in other roles to become managers. We will be actively seeking to increase the percentage of local management in Ayana.
B8 The international or national legal protection of employees is respected, and employees are paid at least a living wage.	In Cambodia, the minimum wage is \$128 per month (2015), all of our staff earn a significant amount more than this. In addition, staff benefits outside of legal requirement (e.g. funding for university education, passport and travel fund) provide additional in-kind support way beyond a normal living wage here.	As we expand into rural communities, we want to do baseline studies of current income levels to measure how effective our tours are at increasing income generation, providing a living wage for beneficiaries.
B9 The activities of the organisation do not jeopardise the provision of basic services, such as food, water, energy, healthcare or sanitation, to neighboring communities.	No, they don't.	Seek to support organisations that actively discourage this, as it is something we feel very passionate about.
B10 Tourism activity does not adversely affect local access to livelihoods, including land and aquatic resource use, rights-of-way, transport and housing.	No, they don't.	Seek to support organisations that actively discourage this, as it is something we feel very passionate about.

We are proud of...

- Supporting local development projects through business, not 'hand out' charity
- Ethical HR policies that go above & beyond
- Responsible travel through a focus on education
- Being ChildSafe certified

We want to improve...

- Increase local management & encourage staff advancement
- Ensure service providers have ChildSafe training as much as is possible, or follow our Child Protection Policy

Enhancing cultural heritage

GSTC Criteria	Ayana Journeys Commitment	Ayana Journeys Targets
C1 The organisation follows established guidelines or a code of behaviour for visits to culturally or historically sensitive sites, in order to minimise negative visitor impact and maximise enjoyment.	We provide Know Before Your Go (pre-departure) guidelines including cultural etiquette (behavior and dress) when customers book. During the visitors' stay, we also continue to raise awareness about how to behave culturally appropriate (including how to minimise you impact when visiting sites such as the Angkor Archaeological Park).	Continue to support campaigns that promote responsible travel behaviour (e.g. Learning Service) and seek new ways in which to influence the travelling community to be more respectful.
C2 Historical and archaeological artifacts are not sold, traded or displayed, except as permitted by local to international law.	We do not sell artifacts etc.	
C3 The organisation contributes to the protection and preservation of local historical, archeological, culturally and spiritually important properties and sites, and does not impede access to them by local residents.	During visits to historical sites, entrance ticket costs are covered which under the management is reinvested into the conservation of those sites. When we visit spiritual sites, we make donations to monks to contribute to the maintenance of these sites. We do not prevent local residents visiting these sites.	
C4 The organisation incorporates elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage in its operations, design, decoration, food, or shops; while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.	We aim to connect arts and cultural organisations through tourism. We believe educating travellers about these is integral in their conservation, and provides a sense of place during the visitors' stay.	

We are proud of...

- Robust pre-departure literature to educate travellers about how to visit cultural sites responsibly + be culturally sensitive
- Support + promote organisations dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage

We want to improve...

- Influencing the tourism industry beyond our operations to be culturally respectful
- Continue to find more inspiring organisations preserving cultural assets

Reducing negative impacts to the environment

GSTC Criteria	Ayana Journeys Commitment	Ayana Journeys Targets
D1.1 Purchasing policies favour locally appropriate and ecologically sustainable products, including building materials, capital goods, food, beverages and consumables.	We always advocate the use of local products and services, and tours include locally procured food, drinks, and gifts.	Support our supply chain to follow sustainable purchasing policies (sphere of influence).
D1.2 The purchase and use of disposable and consumable goods is measured and the organisation actively seeks ways to reduce their use.	We currently do not monitor the difference between disposable and consumable goods, but we purchase very few items for our small office so our impact is relatively low.	In the future, when we are larger, we want to introduce a methodology of monitoring all goods to better understand how and what to reduce.
D1.3 Energy consumption is measured, sources are indicated, and measures are adopted to minimise overall consumption, and encourage the use of renewable energy.	Our energy consumption is very minimal, computers and fans only in our office. We have excellent natural ventilation and light. We do not currently measure our consumption (we do not receive these measurements, as we are a sub-let office space). Guests are encouraged to use little energy during their holiday.	In the future, when we are larger, we want to introduce a methodology of monitoring all consumption to better understand how and what to reduce.
D1.4 Water consumption is measured, sources are indicated, and measures are adopted to minimise overall consumption. Water sourcing is sustainable, and does not adversely affect environmental flows.	Preference for guest accommodation is given where environmental credentials exist. In our office, we only consume drinking water and toilet flushing. We do not currently measure our consumption (we do not receive these measurements, as we are a sub-let office space). Our water comes from the city's main water line. Guests are encouraged to use little water during their holiday.	In the future, when we are larger, we want to introduce a methodology of monitoring all consumption to better understand how and what to reduce.
D2.1 Greenhouse gas emissions from all sources controlled by the organisation are measured, procedures are implemented to minimise them, and offsetting remaining emissions is encouraged.	We prefer the approach in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, rather than offsetting them. Therefore, we aim to minimise our emissions by promoting the use of public transport or bus travel where possible, and activities such as cycling or walking.	In the future, when we are larger, we want to introduce a methodology of monitoring all consumption to better understand how and what to reduce.
D2.2 The organisation encourages its customers, staff and suppliers to reduce transportation - related greenhouse gas emissions.	We always try and use local suppliers, so that transportation is reduced. As we specialise in group tours, customers transport is included in the tour, and we use vans/buses to reduce the number of vehicles. Our staff live close by the office, and where possible, we encourage sharing transport or commuting by bicycle.	If we purchase company vehicles, we will ensure that we use bio-diesel.

GSTC Criteria	Ayana Journeys Commitment	Ayana Journeys Targets
D2.3 Wastewater, including grey water, is effectively treated and is only reused or released safely, with no adverse effects to the local population and the environment.	Preference for guest accommodation is given where environmental credentials exist. At our office, grey water is treated via the main city system. Unfortunately in Cambodia, sewage management is still an issue in many locations.	
D2.4 Waste is measured, mechanisms are in place to reduce waste, and where reduction is not feasible, to re-use or recycle it. Any residual waste disposal has no adverse effect on the local population and the environment.	Most of the waste we produce is paper, as trip notes are needed for many of our tours. Our educational tours are given a PEPY Reader, which is a bound book of articles, which means it can be reused again and again rather than printing each trip. At the moment, we do not monitor the waste we produce, but our office output is very minimal.	In the future, when we are larger, we want to introduce a methodology of monitoring all consumption to better understand how and what to reduce.
D2.5 The use of harmful substances, including pesticides, paints, swimming pool disinfectants, and cleaning materials, is minimized, and substituted when available, by innocuous products or processes. All storage, use, handling, and disposal of chemicals are properly managed.	N/A (But accommodation with natural/salt water swimming pools are given preference)	
D2.6 The organisation implements practices to minimise pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and air, water and soil contaminants.	Our tours do not have create noise pollution, as they are all led to be culturally sensitive.	
D3.1 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 to international laws.	No, they are not.	
D3.2 No captive wildlife is held, except for properly regulated activities, in compliance with local to international law. Living specimens of protected and wildlife species are only kept by those authorised and suitably equipped to house and care for them humanely.	No, they are not.	Seek to support organisations that actively support the protection of wildlife species, as it is something we feel very passionate about.

We are proud of...

- Support + promote organisations dedicated to environmental best practice + wildlife conservation
- Service provider checklist gives preference to businesses operating to good environmental practices

We want to improve...

- Whilst our impact is currently small, it is important we begin to monitor + measure our outputs to attempt to reduce them