

Sustainability policy of Picos de Aventura, Animação e Lazer, SA



Purpose

Picos de Aventura is committed to be a changing agent within the Azorean context, by promoting its sustainable development as special outdoor tourism destination. The purpose of this policy is to create set of guidelines to achieve this goal, that we will share among all our team, partners and stakeholders.

Scope

This policy applies to our Ocean and Land activities, as well as to all the other areas of organization within our company. A very important part of this policy is to include our partners and suppliers, in a gradual way

Tiago Botelho is responsible for implementing the company's sustainability policy.

Sustainability management & legal compliance

Sustainability commitment

Picos de Aventura administration board and management team is committed to make sustainability the bottomline of all our decisions, strategy and operation.

We will use the most appropriate tools and methods to organize and develop our work, while include in our policy all the initiatives that we have been developing within our company, over the last 20 years.

Our policy will be shared with everyone, and revised every 2 years.

Sustainability management & legal compliance

Picos de Aventura will develop and improve its sustainability strategy in a consistent way, with constant monitoring and revised actions. We have created internally a green team, dedicated to this subject and project. All resources necessary shall be provided by our administration board, within the action spectrum of this policy.

Having also other international certifications, and being one of the oldest tourism companies in the Azores, Picos de Aventura follows all 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 have and follow a strict Code of Ethics, including a zero-tolerance policy for corruption, bribery, forced labor, and discrimination.

Internal management: social policy & human rights

Picos de Aventura core values are: trust, honesty, respect, loyalty, professionalism, efficiency, good faith and dedication.

Based on these values, all team members have their fundamental rights safeguarded, as provided for in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, such as the right to integrity and personal identity; good name and reputation; image; word; to the reservation of intimacy of private and family life; protection against any form of discrimination, as well as other rights provided for in the Portuguese Labor Code, such as freedom of expression; physical and moral integrity and the protection of personal data.

Each employee should be treated fairly, and Picos de Aventura should promote

equality of opportunities for personal and professional development, namely through a rigorous and constructive performance evaluation, and also in the participation in programs for professional training, and encouraging participation in extra-professional activities.

Internal management: environment

Environmental management of office operations

- We are committed to keeping the direct footprint of our business operations as minimal as possible. We have the following measures in place:
 - Follow all local and national regulations concerning environmental law
 - Measure, monitor, and evaluate use of all commodities and products purchased, especially in terms of water, waste, energy, and carbon
 - Procure office supply. locally, seasonally, fair trade, in bulk, with limited packaging, sustainability certified whenever possible
 - Print only when absolutely necessary, and when printing, always print double-sided on grayscale. Paper must always be FSC or equivalent certified, with preference for the highest percentage post-consumer materials
 - Energy saving measures are in place in all common areas
 - All equipment and lighting is energy-efficient and turned off/unplugged/on sleep mode when not in use
 - Waste is separated into the following categories: plastic, paper and glass, and is disposed of properly by the municipality
 - Noise, light, and air pollution is minimised

Carbon management of office operations

- Picos de Aventura is committed to reducing our carbon footprint and endeavours to reduce the amount we travel as much as possible by:
 - Reduce the amount we travel as much as possible
 - Monitoring and measuring carbon footprint with the aim to reduce as much as possible and offset remaining amounts.
 - Encourage remote work whenever possible, and when it is not possible, making it easier for employees to limit their carbon footprint by use of eco modes of transportation.
 - We commit to evaluate the best solution for offsetting our remaining direct and indirect carbon from travel and fossil energy use.
 - Implementing procedures such as following proper maintenance for vehicle fleet, investing in electric and more modern vehicles, that have less emissions
 - Installing energy efficient equipment and appliances, when and where is possible.

Land use

- Picos de Aventura offices are located in an urban area and abides by all local land use laws, respects local cultural and natural resources in our business operations, and favours sustainable architecture and design.

It's a rented space in an existing building.

General suppliers policy

- Picos de Aventura 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.
- Picos de Aventura prefers to work with local partners that share the company's commitment towards sustainability. 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.
- Over the last years, we have been giving preference to suppliers that are locally owned or managed, use local and seasonal products and services and benefit the local community by hiring locally and equitably and by providing fair working conditions.
- Whenever possible, Picos de Aventura prefers to select partner companies that comply with tourism-specific, internationally recognized (GSTC-accredited) certifications, or other sustainability certifications like B Corp or ISO.
- We expect our suppliers to follow 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 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 [company]
- Following a zero-tolerance policy, we will immediately terminate any relationships with suppliers that promote acts of bribery, corruption, discrimination, and violation of human rights.
- Picos de Aventura raises awareness amongst its suppliers to adopt sound social and environmental practices, and to minimise their carbon footprint.
- Picos de Aventura learns and actively collaborates with suppliers to improve their sustainability

performance. We encourage our suppliers to continuously learn about sustainability and provide/support this learning whenever possible.

- We maintain an open lines of communication with our suppliers and partners and encourage feedback from our stakeholders at any time and on any topic, particularly sustainability.

Inbound partner agencies

- In the entire process of developing and operating travel packages, Picos de Aventura expects partner agencies to act in the best interests of the surrounding communities and environment as well as our guests.
- We actively offer activities and solutions that promote the sustainable economic development of the communities we visit, while guest visit these locations with us
- Picos de Aventura provides partner agencies opportunities for sustainability learning and management, while promoting the Travelife online learning and reporting platform.
- We will use the Travelife logo in all our communication platforms and channels, as soon as we have the Certification.

Transport

- Living and operating in an island, and being an inbound travel agency, the vast majority of guests fly to the island. Therefore, what we do to minimize the impact is to promote longer visits to improve the chances to contribute to the local economy and learn more about this sustainable destination.
- When selecting transport for guests and business related travel, Picos de Aventura 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. For example, guests that choose to do island hopping, we offer the possibility to travel by ferryboat, when available.
- Picos de Aventura has been implementing clear guidelines for reducing GHG emissions from transport and selecting the most environmentally friendly transport options, including the following measures:
 - Avoiding in-destination flights as much as possible
 - Using appropriate vehicle sizes for group sizes and purchasing most efficient vehicles available
 - Training drivers on eco-driving techniques
 - Reducing the routes we do in our tours, promoting more time in each visiting place

- Investing in more modern, fuel efficient vehicles, and we have also bought our first electric vehicle for tours.
- Also, we have in place a checking procedure to ensure the correct maintenance of the vehicles we currently have, in order to keep them in the best operating conditions.
- Picos de Aventura endeavours – and is currently working in a system – to measure and compensate for the unavoidable GHG emissions produced from transportation.

Accommodations

Whenever partners or clients ask us to include accommodation in their packages and experiences, we contract accommodation through Turangra Azores DMC. Turangra is part of the same group of companies as Picos de Aventura, as the close relationship between both ensures we are aligned with the same sustainability concerns and goals.

Turangra is currently undergoing their certification with Travelife.

Activities & Excursions

- Picos de Aventura runs the majority of their experiences, under our internal policy and guidelines, and also our internal Code of Ethics
- All excursions and activities run by or on behalf of Picos de Aventura respect local customs, traditions, cultural integrity, and natural resources, as stated in our mission that can be consulted in our website.
- Picos de Aventura commits to not offering any excursions that harm humans, wildlife, environment, or natural resources such as water and energy.
- Picos de Aventura gives preference to excursion partners and activities that benefit local communities, respect animal welfare and support environmental protection.
- During our activities and excursions, we share with our guest our collaboration in scientific and conservation projects, both in land and in the ocean, therefore actively contributing to raise awareness about the sustainability of the Azores destination.

Tour leaders, local representatives, and guides

- Picos de Aventura has been investing in hiring qualified local guides (when possible) to our team,

while investing also in their qualification, personal development and skills. We do this strictly following the Portuguese legislation, but also developing our own training system to ensure the safety of our guests and the best experiences possible.

- Guides are instructed through a detailed process to respect and highlight the local culture, heritage and costumes.
- Nature conservation it's at the core of our operation. Therefore, our team is involved in several conservation projects, developed by the Government of the Azores, or from our own initiative and expense.
- Our marine Biologists also collaborate with the local and international Universities in the development and operation of research studies, that we then apply and share during our excursions.
- Freelance guides must celebrate a formal service provider contract with Picos de Aventura
- Freelance guides must read, understand, acknowledge and sign our code of ethics for guides.

Destinations

Sustainable destinations

- Picos de Aventura only operates in the The Azores – the world's first certified archipelago, since 2019, by EarthCheck.

Contribution to local communities / local economic network

- Created in 2002, Picos de Aventura is an Azorean company focused on providing the opportunity for guests to enjoy the best of what the Azores have to offer. Our activities, whether at sea such as whale watching, or on land such as canyoning, allow you to discover the corners of the island of São Miguel and Terceira, involving you in a constant interaction with nature, as well as local culture and cuisine. Our team, made up of qualified professionals, distinguishes itself by working with small groups of visitors, in order to provide more personalized services, without harming the places where the activities take place.

Environmental stewardship in destinations

- Picos de Aventura ensures that we educate guests about the principles of responsible travel and responsible visitor behaviour, as stated in our Mission: "*We distinguish ourselves by carrying out maritime and land activities with small groups of visitors, in order to provide more versatile and personalized services and to enable the creation of itineraries, without harming the places where these activities take place. The sustainability of the Azores Region is integrated in our operation, as we are committed to finding the balance between what we do and what we preserve.*"

Customer communication and protection

Privacy

- Our customer protection is our priority. Therefore, we maintain a clear privacy policy [<https://shorturl.at/bfBQW>] to ensure
 - Legal compliance in all regards
 - Customers and their data are protected
 - Customers know how their information is being used

Marketing and communication

- We follow an internal code of conducts for Marketing and Communication.
- We strive 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 representative in our marketing, and to always take into account cultural, religious, and ethnic sensitivities.

Sustainability communication

- Customers are informed about the social and environmental impact of their journey, and are educated about the sustainable choices they can make, including transparent communication on:
 - Activities and excursions that benefit the local communities and environmental protection
 - Responsible shopping and illegal souvenirs
 - Sensitive activities and how we invest to cause minimum negative impact.

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
 - Emergency procedures
 - Privacy
 - Transport

 - Shopping local products
 - Sexual exploitation and children in tourism
 - Satisfaction and complaints
- Picos de Aventura maintains open lines of communication with our customers and encourages feedback at any time and on any topic, particularly sustainability.

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 lead by the Sustainability Coordinator, Tiago Botelho, who can be reached at tiago.botelho@picosdeaventura.com.

Effective date

This policy is effective from May 2023.

Revision history

This policy was revised on May 2023

This policy will be revised by May 2024.