

CSR Policy of Topas Ecolodge Company Limited

Core values

Topas Explorer Group was founded in 1973 - For decades we have been talking about a special “Topas spirit”. It is intangible but we recognize it, our guests and collaborators recognize it. It can be difficult to pin down precisely what a spirit is, but the Topas spirit has to do with respect and engagement towards each other and the environment that we share, whomever it is and wherever it is.

Sustainability has been at the front of our minds since we conceived the Topas Ecolodge Company Limited back in 2005. All our operations have been and are still done with respect for local cultures, wildlife and the environment. It has always been natural for us as a company when creating hospitality experiences to acknowledge our imprint – both locally and globally – and to do our best to limit the negative impact and increase the positive impact where we can. The company is built on these core values. They are part of the company’s DNA.

So, whether we are talking about spirit or DNA, sustainability and social responsibility are corner stones of Topas’ way of working.

Another important core value is our desire to enthuse and to be enthused. We wish to excite customers as well as business partners and we wish to do it in a way that allows us, the employees, to be just as excited and thrilled about what we do. To achieve real enthusiasm among employees, we believe that it is necessary to create meaningful and valuable jobs and to let a work environment flourish with engagement and respect.

When we share our enthusiasm for nature travels with guests and business partners, we can move towards shared goals. We strongly believe that our joint forces matter.

Our commitment

As a natural step forward in our aim to continuously work for a good, healthy and sustainable environment for employees, guests, partners and our natural surroundings around the globe, we as a group have complied with the international standards stated by the UN Global Compact programme.

This means that we have adopted the ten principles of the UN Global Compact and integrated them into our daily work and strategies. They help us raise our level of awareness of sustainable efforts and guide us to the areas where we can invest our energy and resources with the greatest benefit for all.

On a yearly basis, we evaluate the targets we set ourselves to achieve and adjust our plans as needed to continue our journey onward. Quarterly we revise our plans if needed.

The monitoring and measurement of each target and activity are carried out at least on a monthly basis – depending on how often it is relevant. All numbers measured are collected in one joint system – measuring the progress of Topas Ecolodge Company Limited. From this system all data analysis and reporting are done. It is our ambition that at least one employee has the ownership of each needed activity.

Topas Ecolodge Company Limited support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.

Topas Ecolodge Company Limited make sure that we are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Topas Ecolodge Company Limited uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

Topas Ecolodge Company Limited support the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.

Topas Ecolodge Company Limited support the effective abolition of child labour.

Topas Ecolodge Company Limited support the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Topas Ecolodge Company Limited support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.

Topas Ecolodge Company Limited undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.

Topas Ecolodge Company Limited encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Topas Ecolodge Company Limited work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Human rights

Our Code of Conduct expresses the ethical requirements we have towards employees, suppliers and business partners throughout the business. We are in the process of incorporating our Code of Conduct in all business areas and contracts so that ultimately all employees, suppliers and business partners are familiar with its content and have signed it. Furthermore, our Code of Conduct is publicly available on our websites for easy access for anyone interested.

Openness, respect and tolerance together with diversity are part of our core values, which is why we ensure a healthy and safe work environment, where acts of discrimination, bullying and harassment are not tolerated.

We put a lot of effort into equal rights and we will continue to strive for our recruitment process to be based on required competences regardless of e.g. gender, culture, ethnicity, religious background, sexuality. These subjects are not exhaustive.

Labour

At Topas Ecolodge Company Limited we recognize the importance of providing meaningful jobs to people and as such provide a reasonable income for all employees to secure their livelihoods. This being our objective, we have identified some areas which are of the utmost importance to us:

- Local job creation
- Local education initiatives
- Low employee churn and high job satisfaction

It is important for Topas Ecolodge Company Limited to be a local contributor in the communities in which we operate. We wish to live up to this engagement by offering educational programmes (e.g. international language courses) and job training programmes in different areas of work to the local communities and by hiring local employees. We support all our employees to succeed in their job and possibly enjoy new competences.

We see low employee churn and high job satisfaction as two sides of the same coin. We want a healthy and attractive workplace, where the physical and psychological well-being and safety of our employees and colleagues are in focus. We are continuously working to maintain a good work environment, where employees can expect to be treated properly and respectfully by both management and colleagues.

Environment

Since 2005, Topas Ecolodge Company Limited has welcomed guests from all over the world in the Sapa region, and we have always been conscious about preserving nature and landscapes that we have visited and revisited through many years. Both guests and employees have as a matter of course worked to ensure that also the next visitors would have the same beautiful experience as did the previous group. This attitude is still a fundamental pillar of our daily work.

Having said that, we are also aware of our industry's impact on the environment. We are all eyes and ears for new accessible ways of how we as part of the travel and tourist industry can ensure that our business supports preservation and sustainable local development around the world. We see possibilities for our work to have a positive impact on people's life and wildlife protection and we make decisions to gain this influence.

We work in an open organization based on loyalty, knowledge sharing and innovation. Both guests, employees and partners continuously provide us with new creative, smart and efficient ideas as of how to work onwards. Efforts have been made to preserve the environment and more are coming. Investments in various ecological projects have already been made and more are coming. We aim to be able to always come back and enjoy the beauty of a landscape, wildlife or other natural wonders.

We have a special focus on the following three areas:

- Reduce the use of single plastic
- Pure water supply
- Reduce the use of fossil fuels

Customers and employees have been drinking water from plastic bottles in our lodge and restaurant. We are in the process of replacing all plastic water bottles with reusable bottles and will continue to do so. In our restaurant kitchen we are also making efforts to reduce the use of single use plastic to an absolute minimum.

In our part of the world too, pure water is a scarce resource. We will lower the amount of pure water transported to our hotel guests and employees by collecting and using rainwater and by cleaning water from sewage, dishwater etc.

Within Topas Explorer Group, we have already turned to renewable sources of energy in some areas of our companies working mainly with transportation of guests and goods. The initiatives already implemented in our sister companies will serve as examples to be copied in other areas of our business e.g. Topas Ecolodge Company Limited. We will continue to convert the use of fossil fuels into renewable sources of energy where we can and at the same time make an effort to reduce the total amount of energy used.

Anti-corruption

Topas Ecolodge Company Limited is considered a major operator in the area where we are present, and it is crucial to protect our employees, our values, beliefs and business ethics. The primary action for Topas Ecolodge Company Limited is to work closely with all local authorities and require that all vendors and business associates comply with our Code of Conduct.

We comply with all procedures, rules and regulations from international, national and local authorities, and all taxes are paid according to local legislation. We maintain our own internal controls to assure this and all records are available for inspection.

The roll-out of our Code of Conduct will be supported by anti-corruption training of selected employees who are most likely to interact with corrupt people or organizations.

Compliance with our CSR policy

It is the responsibility of everyone to comply with our CSR policy in their daily work – both leaders of Topas Ecolodge Company Limited as well as every single employee. It is the responsibility of the management to ensure that our CSR policy is implemented, but the success of our CSR policy will only grow with the engagement of each employee and partner. Our CSR policy is therefore implemented daily on a decentralized basis in the individual functions.

The CSR manager of Topas Explorer Group as well as the CSR manager of Topas Ecolodge Company Limited can be contacted at any time regarding grievances or complaints from both employees, customers or any other observers of unsatisfying issues in regard to the implementation and compliance of our CSR policy. We keep an official record of all inquiries.