



SUSTAINABILITY POLICY – SOLANA TOURS

Solana Tours is a receptive travel agency based in Playa del Carmen, Mexico. We provide travel within Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras & Belize.

Our vision is to promote thoughtful, exceptional travel and tourism, providing visitors with a true experience of our destinations and their respective cultures while aiming to preserve and defend the natural and human resources of those communities for future generations (of both tourists and locals) to enjoy.

Our mission statement reflects this desire:

“Solana Tours is a forward-looking incoming tour agency whose mission is to provide our clients with an honest, local experience; promoting cultural and environmental immersion through close links with neighbourhood suppliers. We consider it our duty to work closely with suppliers, clients and the community at large promoting sustainability through education and preservation of cultural and natural resources in our destinations.”

Responsible tourism requires that all parties involved in the promotion, sale and execution of travel products make a commitment to more sustainable travel practices. From government, to airlines, to tour operators, to hoteliers, to tour leaders and individual tourists; all of us have a responsibility to respect and protect our environment and traditions through correct education and planning and action. Sustainability in tourism is an on-going process, requiring constant monitoring and adjustment of policies as the industry constantly grows and changes.

Some of the most important goals for better sustainability are:

- To minimise negative environmental, social and cultural impacts such as pollution, disrespect of diversity and exploitation of resources.
- To maximise positive impacts within the local community such as improving employment opportunities and working conditions, supporting local community projects and ensuring that the economic and social benefits of tourism reach and remain in the host community too.
- Include local communities in project development and decision making.
- Protect flora and fauna by respecting seasonal restrictions and offering interactions only within their natural surroundings.
- To provide access to people with different physical abilities.
- To encourage meaningful contact between visitors and host communities such as offering home stay options instead of hotel accommodations.

AGENCIA DE VIAJES SOLANA TOURS SA DE CV

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At Solana Tours, we aim to improve our focus on these goals using this sustainability policy and implementing the following working practices:

- Continuing education – of staff, suppliers, guides and clients on the need to respect, protect and connect with our environmental, cultural and economic resources.
- Working closely with our community suppliers in support of their growth as providers of a sustainable, conscious experience.
- Using properly qualified staff (guides & operators) with the necessary knowledge and training to operate effectively.
- To constantly reassess our supplier base to include better accessibility, both physically and intellectually, to nature, culture and community.
- To monitor and revise our policy and practises; through regular feedback from clients and suppliers and sharing our experiences & findings with all involved.

In 2015, Mexico was one of 150 countries which attended the United Nations Summit for Sustainable Development. One of the results of this summit was the publication of 17 sustainable development goals which were universally accepted by the 193 member states.



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Here at Solana Tours, the development plan for our own sustainability policy can be divided into five main categories where we strive to meet the goals set by the United Nations.

1. Management and legal compliance
2. Staff
3. Office
4. Providers
5. Clients

MANAGEMENT AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

- ✓ To have a clear, accessible sustainability policy and action plan which is monitored and adapted frequently by appointed staff and is shared internally and with partners, suppliers, clients and external forums.
- ✓ To comply with all national legislation, regulations and codes of practice.

STAFF

- ✓ To provide a clear written and well-communicated social policy covering employee contracts and human rights.
- ✓ Providing an employment contract including details of job description, wage rate (which must be at least the national minimum), paid holiday and sick leave.
- ✓ Providing medical and liability insurance in line with national standards.
- ✓ Complying with national health and safety standards in the work place and providing periodic training.
- ✓ Providing first aid kits and training.
- ✓ Adhering to national regulations regarding minimum age requirements.
- ✓ Offering a clearly communicated disciplinary procedure and regular monitoring of employee satisfaction.
- ✓ Creating opportunities for students through internships & training schemes
- ✓ Not hindering trade union memberships and representation or collective labour negotiations. Complying with local structures where applicable.
- ✓ Not discriminating on account of gender, race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion/ beliefs of sexual orientation and actively encouraging employment opportunities for people with special needs.
- ✓ Offering resources and opportunities for personal development to all employees.
- ✓ When sending guides with group tours, ensuring guides are nationally accredited and experienced.



OFFICE

- ✓ Applying the practice of Reduce, Reuse & Recycle within the office:
 - Reduce** – the number of consumable items entering the office
 - Reuse** – printing paper on both sides, using ceramic plates, mugs & glasses
 - Recycle** – Participate in the local government program by separating waste for recycling of plastic, glass, cans, batteries, tetra Pak, paper & cardboard, electrical items.
- ✓ Using biodegradable cleaning products where available.
- ✓ Choosing sustainable supply sources where possible.
- ✓ Switching off electrical items when not in use and reducing water usage.
- ✓ Encouraging cycling or walking to work or sharing transport whenever possible.
- ✓ Providing the correct equipment with which to carry out required tasks.
- ✓ Maintaining company vehicles and equipment to a safe standard.
- ✓ Providing training on policy implementation and goals.

PROVIDERS

- ✓ Sharing our sustainability goals and action plan with all suppliers.
- ✓ Selecting sustainable transport options whenever possible, giving priority to local companies to avoid unnecessary mileage.
- ✓ Encouraging transport companies to maintain their vehicles in good condition to improve efficiency and instruct their drivers on energy efficient driving practices.
- ✓ Encouraging transport companies to reduce their use of plastic bottles
- ✓ Informing clients of transport options and sustainability impacts.
- ✓ Giving preference to accommodations which comply with sustainability and quality standards regarding their approach to energy, water, waste and human resource management.
- ✓ Encouraging partner accommodations to become sustainably certified.
- ✓ Ensuring local, trained guides are given priority

CLIENTS

- ✓ Offering only tours and activities which respect local natural and community welfare
- ✓ Providing clear information to clients about how to respect local culture nature and the environment.
- ✓ Promoting activities & accommodations which directly involve and support local communities & encouraging participation in local culture.
- ✓ Providing clear, honest information with indications about sustainable options where available.
- ✓ Protecting client information.
- ✓ Requesting honest and open feedback after a tour.

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