Sustainable development policy

CONTEXT:

Madagascar, biodiversity HOTSPOT

Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world. The island continent is located in the Indian Ocean, 400 kilometers from the African coast. The island's biogeographical isolation and variety of climates and landforms have favored the development of many unique species. Indeed, it is one of the few countries in the world to possess a megadiversity, with endemic flora and fauna ranging from 80 to 90%, and even up to 100% for certain species such as the emblematic lemur.

Crossed by the Tropic of Capricorn, this territory is a blend of African, Indian and Far Eastern influences, offering varied, sumptuous landscapes and exceptional biological diversity, recognized worldwide.

A natural heritage in distress

Environmental destruction on the island is reaching alarming proportions. Today, only 10% of the island's original woodland remains, the vast majority of the species-rich tropical forests to the east and north-west of the island have disappeared, and the number of forest areas dependent on them has declined considerably.

Development challenges

However, despite its considerable natural resources, our country of around 28 million inhabitants (2020) has one of the highest poverty rates in the world. What's more, this unique megadiversity is currently under threat. We have lost 44% of our natural forest, and the endemic flora and fauna that inhabit it are on the verge of extinction.

FOREWORD :

Aware and sensitive to the unique beauty of the country and its current situation (degradation, extinction,), GassyTour has been committed since its creation to bringing a positive and sustainable impact to Madagascar by being an actor of change in the tourism sector. We want to preserve the living world, invest in our island's human capital and participate in the country's economic development with a perpetual view to sustainability and the inclusion of all stakeholders. Tourism is an industry with a wide and diversified value chain, with a strong need for manpower, thus creating direct and indirect employment. It also accounts for 10% of Madagascar's GDP.

This sustainable development policy therefore reflects the company's structure, activities and medium-term objectives. This policy aims to reduce the negative social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of the company's activities, and includes aspects relating to employee health and safety. Our ambition is to become agents of change for sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION :

GassyTour is a Limited Liability Company with a capital of 7,500,000 Ar, created in 2008 as an Incoming Tour Operator (Licence B issued by the Ministry of Tourism). In 2023, GassyTour celebrates its 15th anniversary. During these 15 years, we have made a positive impact on Madagascar's economic and sustainable development. Since our inception, we have been actively engaged in Sustainable Tourism, this commitment is now recognized by the international certification TRAVELIFE "Excellence in Sustainability" since 2018. We are also a key member of two associations involved in sustainable tourism development in Madagascar: Antso Re or Association National de Tourisme Solidaire et Responsable and AVIMA or Accueil Villageois Malagasy.

OUR VALUES

We have built our company around 5 core values.

- Professionalism with our customers
- Rigor with our service providers
- Personalized service (every customer is different)
- Citizenship (respect for national legislation, all employees under contract and social insurance for them and their families)
- Benefits for all

WHAT WE BELIEVE

- SUSTAINABILITY

Our travel philosophy is that everyone should be aware of the need to preserve the natural and cultural capital of our Earth. We firmly believe that we are part of the change towards a better, more sustainable future for tourism.

- HUMAN RICHNESS

Our strength is the unity of each team member. As Steve Jobs said: "The best things that happen in business are not the result of one man's work. It's the work of a whole team. Together, we produce the best things. Together, we are better.

- EACH ONE OF YOU

Our motivation is you. It's to share this happiness with you through these journeys. Because, as Richard Burton says: "The happiest moment in a human life is the departure for an unknown land.

What makes us unique

- CONVICTION

We are deeply committed to the development of sustainable tourism. This is the driving force behind our Tour Operator: a more conscious, sensitive and sustainable way of traveling. Our excellence in sustainability has been certified by the Travelife label. We are proud to be one of only four Tour Operators in Madagascar certified by this label of excellence in sustainability.

- A SINGULAR EXPERIENCE.

Every member of our team gives their very best, from the creation to the realization of each trip, to ensure that this unique experience offers you a healthy dose of wonder.

- PASSIONATE GUIDES

We've won the "Best Guide Award" three times from Chamaleon Reisen, one of Germany's top travel agencies. Our guides Rado and Irène won it twice in 2015, 2016 and 2018 respectively.

I. Internal management: Social policy and human rights

- ✓ We comply with the requirements of LOI N° 2003 -044 Portant Code du Travail.
- ✓ We comply with the requirements of Decree No. 2011-490 of September 6, 2011 on trade union organizations and representativeness. Our employees enjoy freedom of association
- ✓ All employees of the organization have a written employment contract, including working conditions and job description.
- ✓ The company pays employees a salary at least equal to or higher than the legal minimum.
- ✓ The organization provides health insurance for all employees.
- ✓ The company has pension plans for all staff members.
- ✓ The company provides pregnancy and maternity leave for all employees.
- ✓ Our employees are trained in first aid.
- ✓ We comply with ILO Convention 138 on minimum age.
- ✓ The company ensures the skills, personal development and progression of its employees (at all levels of responsibility), by offering equal resources and opportunities, such as regular training, access to education or the acquisition of experience relevant to the nature/organization of their work.

II. Internal environmental management

Procurement / Purchasing :

For the office

- ✓ We use refillable water bottles for our customers during their travels.
- ✓ We buy responsibly packaged or locally produced tea

- ✓ We buy committed coffee - Nescafé
- ✓ We buy sugar in bulk, which we store in our jar
- ✓ We buy reams of FSC-certified paper
- ✓ We buy gifts from local artisans, using sustainable materials for our customers: Jute bags, spices produced ethically and sustainably by Sahanala, a Fair Trade Tourism-certified company.

For the kitchen :

- ✓ We use ceramic crockery and stainless steel cutlery.
- ✓ We use cloth napkins instead of paper towels. Worn napkins are then used as tea towels.
- ✓ We use baskets instead of plastic bags.
- ✓ We use solid soap without packaging or single-use containers for washing up.

For toilets

- ✓ We use toilet paper made from recycled paper
- ✓ We now use soap instead of plastic hand-wash detergent
- ✓ We use Ecocert-certified cleaning products

Paper (for Customer brochures)

- ✓ The company has implemented measures to reduce brochure waste. The quantity of brochures is measured on an annual basis.
- ✓ We only offer these catalogs to our customers before they return home. We print according to the precise number of customers coming.

Energy consumption

- ✓ We work comfortably in natural daylight
- ✓ We configure our computers so that the screen switches off when not in use for 10 minutes, and goes into standby mode after 30 minutes.
- ✓ We use LED bulbs
- ✓ At finds of the day, we switch off all computers and our printer, and unplug all sockets.
- ✓ We use a gas heater
- ✓ We have a system for monitoring electricity consumption

Water consumption

- ✓ We reduce our car washing as much as possible to save water.

- ✓ We have installed a sand bottle in the toilet flush to reduce the volume of water that spills out when it is flushed.
- ✓ We have a system for monitoring water consumption.

Waste management

Waste prevention is the best start to waste reduction. We're including the 5Rs rule in our approach: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Compost (Root). We'll start by refusing unsustainable purchases, then reducing what we have left to buy. We'll replace disposable items with reusable ones, and repair goods instead of throwing them away. We'll separate what little waste we have left and recycle it. Compost what is organic and biodegradable.

- ✓ We have installed sorting bins in the office, and drop off our sorted waste at the Sambalia Antsahavola collection point (a store specializing in zero waste in Madagascar).

Paper :

- ✓ We organize and generalize the recovery of paper printed on one side only, to be used as drafts.
- ✓ We choose to print in black and white most of the time
- ✓ We no longer print paper signs to welcome customers; we now use our iron signs.
- ✓ We print as few documents as possible and encourage electronic communication with suppliers.
- ✓ We recycle out-of-date brochures/catalogues and paper we no longer need with our recycling partner.

Packaging and containers

- ✓ We use mugs to drink water in the office
- ✓ We use ceramic crockery and stainless steel cutlery to avoid single-use disposable cutlery.
- ✓ We fold and reuse cardboard boxes to reduce clutter and waste.
- ✓ We use baskets instead of plastic bags.
- ✓ We use jars to store sugar and cocoa.
- ✓ We buy tea with eco-responsible packaging and Nescafé committed coffee.
- ✓ We reduce the use of individually wrapped products to produce less packaging waste.
- ✓ We prefer to buy products in bulk packaging.
- ✓ We use high-quality, durable and easily repairable products.
- ✓ We use 80% Kraft Doypacks for the spices we offer our customers.

Reducing pollution

- ✓ Wastewater, including grey water, is effectively treated in accordance with national legislation, and is only reused or discharged safely, with no adverse effects on the local population or the environment.

Mobility

- ✓ All our employees use public transport to get to and from work.
- ✓ Company vehicles are well maintained and regularly checked to reduce emissions and energy consumption.

Sustainability training and awareness-raising

- ✓ All staff members receive regular guidance, training and/or information on their roles and responsibilities regarding internal environmental practices, including water, energy conservation, paper and waste management.

Land use and community relations

- ✓ We integrate elements of local art, architecture or cultural heritage into our operations, in design, decoration, food or stores, while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.

III. PARTNER AGENCIES

- ✓ Our main partners are Travelife certified.
- ✓ Key sustainability clauses are included in contracts with partner agencies (e.g. child labor, anti-corruption, waste management and biodiversity protection).
- ✓ Our main partner agency provides information and explanations on sustainability issues related to the destination (protection of fauna, flora and cultural heritage, use of resources) and socio-cultural values (advice, dress and photography), including through the distribution of customer codes of conduct.

IV. TRANSPORT

- ✓ For vehicles, whether for transfers or the tour itself, we use cars adapted to the size of the customer group.
- ✓ For in-country transport: depending on the tour, we offer our customers fuel-efficient vehicles. Unfortunately, this is not always possible in Madagascar due to the road infrastructure requiring national flights for certain tours.
- ✓ We carefully select our partners on the basis of safety criteria (seatbelts, safe driving, vehicle condition, etc.) and quality (vehicles regularly maintained to minimize carbon emissions), as well as drivers who respect traffic regulations.
- ✓ We train our drivers in eco-driving

V. ACCOMODATION

- ✓ We sent a questionnaire to all the hotels we work with to assess their commitment to sustainable development.
- ✓ We have sent our sustainable accommodation policy to our partner hotels.
- ✓ We have an inventory of certified accommodation in Madagascar. Whenever possible, we give preference to these certified hotels, depending on the customer's budget and room availability.
- ✓ Contracted accommodations are encouraged to carry out a self-assessment of their business on a regular basis, and to share this information with the tour operator. The link to the self-assessment on the Travelife platform is included in the questionnaire we will be sending out to our hotel partners.
- ✓ As far as possible, we give preference to establishments that highlight Malagasy culture (decoration, cuisine, entertainment, etc.).
- ✓ We are very vigilant with our hotel partners. Each new partner we work with receives a letter from us explaining that our collaboration will cease immediately if adequate measures are not taken against the sexual exploitation of children.
- ✓ We ask our guides and guide-drivers to report any suspicious establishments to us when they come across anything that might resemble child sexual exploitation.

VI. EXCURSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- ✓ The company has drawn up an inventory of environmentally and/or culturally sensitive excursions to Madagascar.
- ✓ We have a responsible excursion policy and codes of conduct for all activities
- ✓ On all our tours, we offer eco-responsible excursions with the aim of preserving local flora and fauna and actively contributing to the development of local communities. (Reforestation, mangrove preservation, local guides for rural tourism...). We have partnered with GERP (Groupe d'Etude et de Recherche sur les Primates) in central Madagascar to reforest an area with local and endemic trees.
- ✓ We assess our local guides' sustainability self-assessment to our tour operator and local guide partners.
- ✓ We never propose activities that could have a negative impact on the environment, people and their culture. Madagascar has many "fady" (taboos) and we always ask our clients to respect them and follow the advice of their guide.
- ✓ Excursions and attractions that include animals in captivity are offered only for activities regulated in accordance with local, national and international laws.
- ✓ We comply with the requirements of LOI n°2005-018 on international trade in species of wild fauna and flora.
- ✓ All our tours include at least one visit to the local community, where most of the benefits go directly to the local population. All the associations and NGOs we work with are listed on our website.

- ✓ Our package include several visits to protected areas and village parks with direct economic repercussions for the local population. We also include reforestation in our tours.

VII. GUIDES, LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES AND COMPANIONS

- ✓ All our guides are Malagasy nationals, whether they are tour leaders or local guides. All drivers are also Malagasy.
- ✓ Our guides work in accordance with local regulations.
- ✓ Our guides inform customers about relevant sustainable development topics in the destination. We will share the latest relevant information on sustainability in Madagascar internally (tourist agent/tour guide) every month.
- ✓ For German tourists in particular, we have designed a Tour Guide Manual (in progress for French- and English-speaking tourists), outlining the key concepts to be passed on to customers at each stage of the tour. This covers not only environmental aspects, but also the cultural values specific to each region. We plan to extend this initiative to French- and English-speaking tourists.

VIII. DESTINATIONS

- ✓ We have a file on the main sustainability aspects of Madagascar as a destination.
- ✓ We have a policy of creating sustainable tours
- ✓ However, we have set up tours that we call "loop tours" without air transport.
- ✓ The company's activities are in line with law-based spatial planning, heritage and protected area regulations and destination management strategies of local, national and international authorities.
- ✓ We are members of the Accueil Villageois Malagasy (AVIMA) network. This association welcomes tourists in rural gites. Villagers are responsible for reception, catering, accommodation and excursions. All products on offer are local (food, crafts).
- ✓ Our tours also include the purchase of souvenirs from local craft stores, most of the time before customers are transferred to the airport.
- ✓ We are members of the Confédération du Tourisme (CTM) and the Association des Tour-Opérateurs Professionnels (TOP), which have direct links with the French Ministry of Tourism. Both are actively involved in the development of sustainable tourism and work closely with the Ministry of Tourism on sustainable tourism development initiatives.
- ✓ We actively support biodiversity conservation. Every year we reforest and monitor the reforestation work carried out. We are a partner of GERP (Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Primates) and every guest visiting Andasibe plants 5 trees in the Maromizaha protected area managed by GERP.
- ✓ We also include several protected areas and biodiversity "HOTSPOT" zones in all our offers.

- ✓ We have a "Prepare your trip" document that brings together all the information our customers need in advance of their trip to Madagascar. It includes information on authorized and prohibited souvenirs.

IX. CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMUNICATION

Before booking

- ✓ We send our customers a file containing guidelines and practical advice for preparing their trip to Madagascar.
- ✓ The company complies with LAW N° 2014 - 038 on the protection of personal data: "Any explicit, free, specific and informed expression of will by which the person concerned agrees to personal data concerning him or her being processed."
- ✓ We never publish any information without the consumer's consent. For example, testimonials sent by our customers are published on our website only with their prior consent.
- ✓ The information contained in e-mail exchanges, as well as the travel programs and the document containing important information and tips for preparing your trip to Madagascar, are true to life.
- ✓ In our tour proposals, we clearly indicate the associations we work with and their objectives. During visits, customers are informed of the reason for the visit and the economic contribution they make to the life of the association.
- ✓ We have informed and continue to inform our customers and prospects of our commitment to sustainable tourism and our Travelife certification.

After booking and during your trip

- ✓ Our guides or driver-accompaniers give customers an extensive pre-departure briefing on a range of topics, including our commitment to sustainable tourism, ecogestures, codes of conduct for responsible travel and more.
- ✓ Information is provided to customers on the natural environment, local culture and cultural heritage in the destination.
- ✓ Customers are informed about health and safety risks and precautions in the destination.
- ✓ A contact person is permanently available on the telephone for emergency situations. This number is given to customers on arrival.
- ✓ We have a file containing the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency.
- ✓ Customers are informed of applicable legislation concerning the purchase, sale, import and export of historical or religious handicrafts and items containing materials from endangered fauna and/or flora in the destination (e.g. CITES).

After the trip

- ✓ Customer satisfaction is systematically measured and the results taken into account in product and service improvements.
- ✓ Sustainable development is integrated into customer satisfaction assessments.
- ✓ We take action on customer complaints.

We would like to thank you for placing your trust in us and working with us to promote the sustainable development of our country and our planet.

We are open and enthusiastic about all proposals, exchanges and collaborations in this direction.