



## **A. Introduction**

**Lomatka Travel Company** is an inbound tour operator and DMC in Finland, registered with the registration number 3258706-1 in Helsinki, designing and selling customized Finland tours to foreign travel agents. Our main value is to offer sustainable and responsible Finland tour packages in a way to cause the least possible environmental and socio-cultural impacts on the nature and culture of Finland and let the host community benefits from the tourism industry sustainably. Accordingly, we hire the service providers and employees who share the same point of view with us so that we could be able to succeed in our mission. Additionally, we engage all our service providers and staff members in our vision and train them permanently to guarantee a sustainable tourism business.

Here are the common principles for sustainable Finland travel that we are committed to in cooperation with Visit Finland:

### **1- We cooperate fairly:**

We develop tourism in cooperation with other parties in the country and industry. Together, we can make a better impact on the future of the society and tourism. We want Finland to be a good place to visit and live in now and in the future, therefore we choose sustainable practices to preserve the tourism resources for the future generations as well. We treat everyone with respect and fairness, and we also trade fairly and honestly.

### **2- We take care of the nature:**

We protect the environment, landscapes and biodiversity of the country. Our sales do not exceed the carrying capacity of the attractions, but contribute to ensuring the opportunities for a good life and the preservation of a clean environment. We also take care of the welfare of the animals and let the travelers interact with them sustainably.

### **3- We respect cultural heritages:**

We cherish the cultural heritage of Finland. Our goal is the genuine and respectful presentation, revitalization, maintenance and strengthening of the Finnish culture. We also understand that cultures have always evolved in interaction and learned from each other.

### **4- We promote prosperity, human rights and equality**

We treat our employees, customers and residents of the local areas equally with respect, regardless of their background. We take people's special needs into account

in our operations. We train, guide and encourage our staff and suppliers to act responsibly.

**5- We prefer local:**

We support the local service providers in Finland and aim to employ local people. We also prefer the local food made from Finnish ingredients. We try to benefit the local residents and businesses of different destinations in matters that concern them.

**6- We invest in safety and quality:**

We take care of the safety of local residents, our staff and tourists, and comply with the law and regulations. When we develop the quality of our services and products, we create the conditions for the continuity of our own operations.

**7- We take into account the climate impact:**

We make good choices for the climate and reduce our carbon footprint. We monitor the impact of tourism on the environment and, through active measurement, aim for more efficient use of energy and resources.

**8- We communicate openly:**

We boldly communicate in our area about responsible tourism and future plans and visions. We want Finland's sustainable tourism to be known in the world. We talk openly about success, but also about challenges.

**9- We are constantly developing our business:**

We are ready to renew our services and products so that there will be sufficient demand for them in the future as well. A stable economy and ethical business create the basis for the sustainable development of operations. Also, we actively attend tourism events such as seminars and workshops.

**10- We are committed to the principles of sustainable tourism:**

We will take an active role in promoting sustainable tourism and implementing these principles of sustainable tourism. We are committed to action and want to learn more in the future.

## B. Our sustainability guidelines

### 1. Socio-cultural sustainability:

- 1-1) We know the history, culture, and traditions of the country, so we try to include tangible and intangible **cultural points of interest** in our tour packages such as cultural events, historical and cultural attractions, and tours with locals to get the tourists familiar with local lifestyle, costumes, and cuisine.
- 1-2) We permanently develop our **knowledge** of the Finnish cultural heritages to be able to succeed in the provision of cultural visits to our tourists. Accordingly, we take advantage of tourism events, field trips, printed materials, courses, exhibitions, seminars, webinars, and workshops.
- 1-3) Our **tour guides** have been trained to provide adequate explanations regarding the cultural elements of the country to the travelers and let them have interactions with the locals.
- 1-4) We are familiar with the characteristics of the **culture of our tourists' country of origin** to take it into account in the tour sales and operations. Also, we try to develop our such knowledge to improve our customer service.
- 1-5) We support the **preservation** of the local cultural heritages. Although we try to promote them in our tours, we try to preserve them in a way they do not get commercialized gradually.
- 1-6) **Locality** matters to us, so we try to let our tourists be served with **local foods** made from organic local ingredients. Also, we try to let our tourists interact with **local craft** makers and purchases the local designs instead of the imported foreign ones.
- 1-7) We hold **annual events** and meetings with our suppliers and employees to share our achievements and appreciate our local service providers. Moreover, we give updates of our plans and our sustainability policy.
- 1-8) Local **events** are one of our main points of focus, and we try to choose the dates for the tours when there are events in Finland.
- 1-9) We plan to hold **voluntary campaigns** during the tours so that if the tourists would like, they can remove the plastic waste, bottles, and cigarettes they see in the nature, and in return we give them badges at the end of the tour.
- 1-10) We have interactions with other tourism companies and SMAL (Association of Finnish Tour Operators) to exchange information regarding sustainable and responsible tourism.

- 1-11) We permanently collect **feedbacks** from our employees, customers, subcontractors, and service providers to improve our services.
- 1-12) We **treat** our subcontractors, service providers, customers, and employees equally and fairly regardless of sexual orientation, religion, culture, language, physical limitations, food diet, and sensory impairments.
- 1-13) We try to provide good moments for our clients by means of tour quality. So, we do not exaggerate or lie about the tours' **quality** and services. Accordingly, we collect customer feedbacks to improve our quality.

## 2. **Environmental sustainability:**

- 2-1) We follow the common principles of sustainable tourism of Metsähallitus and UNESCO heritages.
- 2-2) We take care of the animals physical, social, and mental rights. We limit the tourists' direct interaction with endangered animal species to help the conservation of them.
- 2-3) We only include **sustainable means of transport**, offered by responsible carriers. Also, we provide our tourists with an opportunity to ride **bikes** and **scooters** within the towns. If possible, we include trains and boats on the tours instead of the coaches and flights with higher emissions. Also, we offer electric car rentals only.
- 2-4) We do not serve foods and drinks to our tourists in plastic **packages** and use reusable objects instead. Also, we encourage our employees and customers to use the tap water instead, which in Finland is in high quality.
- 2-5) In the **nature**, we try not to leave anything but footprints and take nothing but photos. Accordingly, we try to accommodate our tourists in ecolodges and sustainable accommodation facilities.
- 2-6) During the itinerary design, sales, and operations, we take a great care that the number of travelers visiting a site does not exceed the **carrying capacity** of the sites.
- 2-7) We provide our tourists with **practical materials** before the tour so that they could be aware of our policy regarding sustainable Finland tours. Moreover, we train our tour guides to give adequate explanations to the tourists on how to visit the sites without leaving any traces.
- 2-8) We try to reduce the **energy use and waste** by turning off the unneeded lights, contracting with eco-friendly electricity providers, and using eco-friendly detergents.

- 2-9) We try **recycle** our waste including paper, bio, plastic, metal, glass, fabrics, electronics, and carton waste. Moreover, we try to reduce the use of bottled water and use the tap water instead. We also encourage our tourists to recycle their waste or return the bottles on the tours.
- 2-10) We do not make paper prints, issue paper invoices or receipts and try to archive the documents **digitally**.
- 2-11) Our company has made the Commitment to **Sustainability2050** Social Commitment.

### 3. Financial sustainability

- 3-1) We try to attract tourists in the **low season** as well by creating unique tour packages to be operated in one specific season.
- 3-2) We attend tourism **events** to get updated with the most recent sustainable strategies in the market.
- 3-3) Our **team members** are provided with the most up to date information regarding sustainability and responsibility in the tourism. Also, they are aware of the company values and visions and act accordingly.
- 3-4) We take care of our tourists' **safety** and take preventive measures beforehand. For example, driving in the winter or keeping them safe from vipers and ticks. Some activities such as snowmobile ride require training beforehand, and we provide the safety equipment and insurance as well.
- 3-5) We train our operations staff members to predict the possible problems of the tours and solve them before they occur. Also, in time of **crisis** we act in accordance with safety instructions.
- 3-6) All our **tour guides** are trained and professionals, and they have been trained on how to deal with the crisis during the tours.
- 3-7) We try to hire **local service providers** for travel arrangements for example accommodation in ecolodges run by Sami families.
- 3-8) We have **no discrimination** policy when hiring new members or service providers. Also, there is a **no harassment** policy within the company.
- 3-9) We take care of our employees' **mental well-being** by providing adequate leave days, incentive trips, and group gatherings.
- 3-10) We do not overwhelm our employees by workload, and we hire new members as the company grows.
- 3-11) We have no gap between men and **women** in the company, and women can work in the leading positions.

- 3-12) We offer tours to all type of people with different sexual orientations, religions, physical disabilities, ethnicity groups, and food diet e.g. vegans or LGTB.
- 3-13) We plan to donate to **charity** programs and raise fund for environmental campaigns.

## C. Action Plan

### 1) Target by 2025:

**Lomatka Travel Company aims to make Finland the most desirable travel destination among the Nordic countries, and also the most sustainable one in the world in cooperation with Visit Finland and in accordance with the STF program.**

**Our goal is to make Lomatka Travel Company a sustainable, reliable and profitable business by 2025 and be recognized as a sustainable incoming tour operator which is active all year round.**

Currently, the Finnish tourism industry has recovered from the covid-19 pandemic, and thus, it has turned into a growing sector. Therefore, we, as one of the elements of Finland's tourism industry, feel responsible to act sustainably in order to prevent the country's travel sector from turning into a destructive mass one. We, in Lomatka Travel Company, care about Finland's nature and culture, so, we have decided to be committed to Visit Finland's sustainability program and preserve the country resources for the future generations as well.

### 2) Measures:

To be able to achieve the aforementioned target, Lomatka Travel Company has set some measures as below:

To put into practice all the mentioned guidelines of the company's sustainability program, as well as Visit Finland's SFT program, and act accordingly. Sustainability in tourism and responsibility in business must root in all aspects of our business:

#### 1- Human Resource:

We have a no discrimination policy, and any person regardless of their religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and physical disability can be employed; however, our priority is always to hire the local people. Moreover, there is no gap between male and female employees, and women can have the leading positions.

Furthermore, we have a no harassment policy within the company, and everyone is treated fairly and equally. Also, we care about our employee's mental well-being, so we provide them with adequate leave days, flexible

working hours, and we do not overwhelm them with workload since we employ new members as the company grows.

- 2- **Suppliers:** We try to work with the suppliers who provide eco-friendly services. Also, we have the same no discrimination policy when choosing our suppliers as in our staff recruitment process.
- 3- **Sales:** All the tour packages and itineraries we offer need to be designed in accordance with our guidelines. Moreover, our sales must not be limited to the high season only; therefore, we need to create unique tour programs for the low season dates to distribute the tourist arrivals throughout the year homogenously.
- 4- **Marketing:** Our main goal is to promote Finland as a travel destination globally, and to achieve that, we make sustainable marketing campaigns honestly and fairly. To be more specific, our focus in marketing is on our competitive advantages, knowledge, and high quality not on destroying our competitors' image. Moreover, we permanently attend events, workshops, and exhibitions to expand our network.
- 5- **Customer Relationship:** There are guidelines with respect to customer service that need to be taken into consideration when communicating with clients, such as our no discrimination and no exaggeration policy. The no exaggeration policy refers to the fact that we do not overestimate our tours quality, and everything needs to be offered honestly and fairly. Moreover, we collect feedbacks from our clients to improve our services.
- 6- **Operations:** Locality matters to us, so in the tour programs, we always include culture-related visits to make our customers familiar with Finland's unique culture.

Tour guides: All our tour guides have been professionally trained on how to explain about the culture and history of Finland. Also, in the adventure and hiking tours, they have the needed expertise to guide the groups in the nature and manage the possible crisis. They can fulfil our sustainability strategies on the tours, and instruct the customers how to act in the nature.

Tour arrangements: We accommodate the travelers in ecolodges and book eco-friendly vehicles to reduce emissions. We also let our tourists experience bikes and scooters within cities, and offer them electric vehicles only for rental. Also, our focus is on the provision of organic local foods both meat-based and vegan.

Safety: We try to predict the crisis and solve them before each happens. Also, we take safety measures into consideration against driving in the winter, and dealing with vipers, bears, and ticks.

Nature: We take the mentioned guidelines into consideration when operating nature-based tours in relation with animal rights and the environment. Generally speaking: we leave nothing but footprints and take nothing but photos.

7- **Energy use:** We recycle all our waste, and try to get our energy from eco-friendly providers. Also, we use eco-friendly detergents and encourage everyone to drink tap water instead of bottled waters to reduce plastic. We turn off the unneeded lights to save electricity.

### 3) Persons in charge

**Our target to put steps into sustainable tourism and responsible business has rooted in our mission and vision; therefore, all team members and suppliers are aware of the guidelines, and everyone is somehow in charge of our sustainability program within their own tasks. However, the CEO of the company, Mr. Mehdi Rasoolniya, makes the needed arrangements and updates in cooperation with Visit Finland to launch and run the SFT program.**

### 4) Objectives

- Concentrate sustainable tourism around the STF label and increase awareness of our sustainability and activities at a national and international level.
- Make sustainability a cross-cutting theme and message in Lomatka's sales and marketing.
- Select the service providers who follow the principles of sustainability.
- Make sustainability an integral theme when promoting Finland to our foreign partners. Sustainable development should be considered holistically in our operations.
- Focus on niche markets against mass tourism as our target group for increasing sustainable travel.
- Embed sustainability when attending exhibitions, providing services, and communicate with customers.
- Cooperate with Visit Finland to develop the STF program nationwide.

**\* Progress and success reports are released annually on the website of the company\***

### 5) Budget

The estimated budget to launch and run the sustainability program has been estimated to be around 230,000 euros until the end of 2025:

Sustainable Marketing: 60,000 €

Sustainable Networking through Events: 45,000 €

Staff Training (Courses & Workshops): 15,000 €

Familiarization trips to develop low-season tours: 25,000 €



Incentive trips: 30,000 €

Annual events: 25,000 €

Waste recycling and energy optimization: 5,000 €

Digitalization (to work paperless with own software): 25,000 €