

Geographic Travel Club

Waste reduction and responsible waste management policy

1. Purpose and scope

Geographic Travel Club is committed to minimizing the environmental and social impacts of waste generated through its operations and tourism activities. This policy aims to prevent waste generation, promote efficient use of resources, and ensure responsible waste handling in line with Travelife sustainability criteria, local legislation, and international best practices.

This policy applies to:

- ⊗ All employees and management
- ⊗ Tour guides and tour leaders
- ⊗ Contractors and service providers
- ⊗ Suppliers and business partners
- ⊗ Guests participating in Geographic Travel Club tours

The policy covers:

- ⊗ Office operations
- ⊗ Tours, excursions, and field activities
- ⊗ Accommodation, transport, and catering services used during tours
- ⊗ Marketing and communication materials

2. Legal compliance and standards

Geographic Travel Club complies with:

- ⊗ Armenian national and municipal waste management regulations
- ⊗ Applicable environmental and labor legislation
- ⊗ Travelife sustainability standards for tour operators

Where local waste infrastructure is limited, we apply best available practices to reduce environmental impact and avoid harm to local communities and ecosystems.

3. Guiding principles

Geographic Travel Club follows the 5R Zero Waste Hierarchy, prioritized as follows:

1. Refuse what we do not need
2. Reduce what we cannot refuse
3. Reuse items wherever possible
4. Repair items to extend their life
5. Recycle or Rot remaining waste through proper recycling or composting

Waste prevention is the highest priority, as it conserves natural resources, reduces pollution, lowers costs, and supports responsible tourism development.

4. Waste prevention and reduction strategies

4.1 Refuse and Reduce

We commit to:

- ⊗ Avoid purchasing products with excessive or unnecessary packaging
- ⊗ Prioritize suppliers offering minimal, recyclable, or returnable packaging
- ⊗ Use digital documents for itineraries, vouchers, brochures, and internal communication
- ⊗ Print only when necessary, always double-sided and in black-and-white where possible
- ⊗ Eliminate unnecessary promotional giveaways and single-use items
- ⊗ Use refillable and recyclable products (e.g. toner cartridges, cleaning supplies, soap dispensers)
- ⊗ Increase bulk purchasing for office, guest, and tour supplies to reduce packaging waste

4.2 Reuse and Repair

We actively:

- ⊗ Replace single-use items with reusable alternatives (water bottles, mugs, lunch boxes)
- ⊗ Encourage staff and guides to use refillable bottles and containers
- ⊗ Use existing single-use items already in stock until depleted, before switching to reusable alternatives
- ⊗ Repair office equipment, furniture, and tour gear where feasible before replacement

4.3 Recycling, organic waste and disposal

- ⊗ Separate waste at the office and during tours where local infrastructure allows
- ⊗ Recycle paper and plastic through ISSD NGO
- ⊗ Avoid littering and ensure all tour-related waste is removed from natural and cultural sites
- ⊗ Never dispose of waste in protected areas or informal dumping sites

5. Sustainable procurement and supplier engagement

We encourage and prioritize suppliers who:

- ⊗ Demonstrate responsible waste management practices
- ⊗ Reduce packaging and offer reusable or refillable solutions
- ⊗ Avoid unnecessary single-use plastics
- ⊗ Comply with environmental and labor regulations

Sustainability criteria are considered when selecting:

- ⊗ Accommodation providers
- ⊗ Transport companies
- ⊗ Catering and food service providers
- ⊗ Activity and excursion partners

6. Engagement and awareness

6.1 Staff and guide engagement

- ⊗ Provide regular training and guidance on waste reduction and waste separation
- ⊗ Integrate waste reduction responsibilities into job roles and tour guide briefings
- ⊗ Encourage staff to actively apply the 5R principles in daily work

6.2 Guest engagement

- ⊗ Inform guests about waste reduction expectations before and during tours
- ⊗ Encourage guests to bring reusable water bottles and bags
- ⊗ Promote responsible behavior at destinations, including proper waste disposal
- ⊗ Provide clear guidance during tours on minimizing waste and respecting local environments

7. Monitoring, targets and reporting

Geographic Travel Club measures and monitors the type and quantity of waste generated to establish a baseline and identify priority actions.

Based on this monitoring, we aim to:

- ⊗ Reduce reliance on plastic bags year by year
- ⊗ Recycle at least 50% of office waste
- ⊗ Achieve 80% double-sided printing

Progress is:

- ⊗ Reviewed annually
- ⊗ Documented internally
- ⊗ Used to define new or improved waste reduction targets

8. Continuous improvement

This policy is reviewed regularly to:

- ⊗ Reflect operational changes
- ⊗ Integrate improvements in local waste management systems
- ⊗ Respond to monitoring results and stakeholder feedback

9. Responsibility and compliance

- ⊗ Overall responsibility lies with Geographic Travel Club management
- ⊗ All employees, guides, suppliers, and partners are expected to comply with this policy
- ⊗ Non-compliance is addressed through awareness, corrective action, and supplier dialogue

Everyone involved in Geographic Travel Club's activities is encouraged to actively contribute to reducing waste and protecting destinations for future generations.