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Sustainability Policy

How we travel lightly, hire locally and share the benefits of tourism with the people of Tooro and the communities across Uganda and East Africa.

Local first We hire, buy and book locally so tourism money stays in Ugandan communities.	**Communities lead** Community experiences are designed with local people, who decide and earn a fair share.	**Wildlife protected** We never offer activities that harm, cage or exploit animals.
Children safe Zero tolerance for child exploitation, and no orphanage visits.	**Fair work** Our team is treated fairly, and women build real careers in tourism.	**Less waste** We cut plastic, paper, fuel and energy wherever we can.

Why this matters to us

Afrika Panthera Safaris is a women-founded and women-led tour company based in Fort Portal, in the Tooro region of western Uganda. We plan tailor-made safaris across Uganda, with extensions into Rwanda, Kenya and Tanzania: gorilla trekking in Bwindi and Mgahinga, chimpanzee tracking in Kibale Forest, game drives and boat trips in Queen Elizabeth, Murchison Falls, Lake Mburo and Kidepo Valley, birding in Semliki, cycling safaris, and time with the communities who live beside these parks.

Everything we offer depends on healthy forests, safe wildlife, proud cultures and communities who welcome visitors. This policy sets out what we do to protect them, and what we expect from everyone who travels and works with us. It follows the Travelife standard for tour operators and Uganda's laws.

Based in Fort Portal Small, local and Ugandan-run	**Women-led** Founded and led by women, with local female guides licensed by the Uganda Tourism Board
Members of Association of Uganda Tour Operators (AUTO) and Association of Uganda Women in Tourism (AUWOTT)	**Working alongside** Climate Friendly and AMREF Uganda

> *"Engaro iganjaine nizo iyora oburo."*
> Hands that work together are the ones that gather the millet harvest.
> — Rutooro proverb

1. Managing sustainability and following the law

Who this is for: *Management and all staff*

Sustainability is part of how we plan trips, choose suppliers and run our office. A member of our team serves as Sustainability Coordinator and reports directly to our CEO.

What we do

- Keep a simple action plan with realistic yearly targets, owners and deadlines.
- Measure where we stand today, so we can show real progress.
- Review our key suppliers every year.
- Share our progress openly on our website at least once a year.
- Share this policy with everyone it concerns: on our website and in booking confirmations for guests, at induction for staff, and in agreements with suppliers and partners.
- Make sure every team member reads and signs this policy when they join, and discuss it again each year.
- Take part in AUTO, AUWOTT and Uganda Tourism Board forums, and work towards Travelife certification.

Laws we follow

- Tourism Act, 2008 and Uganda Wildlife Act, 2019
- National Environment Act, 2019
- Employment Act, 2006, Occupational Safety and Health Act, 2006 and the NSSF Act
- Children Act and the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2009
- Persons with Disabilities Act, 2020 and Data Protection and Privacy Act, 2019

> *"Mpora, mpora, ekahikya omunyongorozi haiziba."*
> Slowly, slowly, the worm reached the well. Steady effort gets you there.
> — Rutooro proverb

2. Our people: fair work and human rights

Who this is for: *Our team, guides, drivers and interns*

As a company founded and led by women, we know what it means to open doors that were once closed. Everyone who works with us should feel safe, respected and fairly paid, with room to grow.

Fair conditions

- A written contract or trip agreement for everyone, including freelance guides and drivers, in a language they understand.
- Fair pay, at or above the legal minimum and the industry rate, paid on time.
- NSSF registration, injury cover, and the paid annual, sick, maternity and paternity leave set out in the Employment Act.
- One month's notice to leave, with no penalty. Nobody under 18 is employed.

Safe at work

- A first aid kit in the office and every vehicle, and first aid training for every guide and driver.
- Training for fires, road accidents, medical emergencies, heavy rain and landslides, and wildlife incidents.

Respect and growth

- Equal treatment regardless of gender, tribe, religion, age, disability or background.
- A confidential way to raise complaints, a fair disciplinary process and the freedom to join a union.
- A one-to-one conversation with each team member every year, and training through AUTO, AUWOTT, the Uganda Tourism Board and online courses.
- Internships for tourism students, including from Mountains of the Moon University in Fort Portal, and a welcome for applicants with disabilities.

> *"Mpa ninkuka nizo engonzi itafa."*
> Where people give to one another, the love between them never dies.
> — Rutooro proverb

3. Our office and the environment

Who this is for: *Our office team*

Our Fort Portal office is small, and most of our impact comes from road travel. Small daily habits still add up.

Use less

- Digital itineraries, invoices and contracts; print only when needed, double-sided.
- Locally made, eco-friendly supplies and gifts, such as crafts from Tooro women's groups.
- Biodegradable cleaning products where available.

Energy and water

- Record electricity, water and fuel use every month.
- Switch equipment off, use LED bulbs and buy energy-efficient equipment.
- Use a solar lamp or power bank during power cuts instead of a petrol generator.
- Use water carefully and fix leaks straight away.

Waste, plastic and carbon

- As little single-use plastic as possible.
- Refillable water containers in our vehicles for guests' reusable bottles.
- Sorted waste, recycled printer cartridges, and safe disposal of batteries and e-waste.
- Yearly carbon calculation and offsetting through Climate Friendly.

> *"Kamu kamu nugwo muganda."*
> One by one makes a bundle. Small savings add up.
> — Rutooro proverb

4. Our suppliers and partners

Who this is for: *Partner agencies, lodges, transport and activity providers*

Lodges, drivers, activity providers and agents all shape our guests' experience. We choose partners who share our values, and we help them improve.

- We prefer locally owned businesses that bring real benefit to nearby communities.
- Every key partner has a written agreement covering child protection, fair labour, anti-corruption, waste and wildlife.
- We can end an agreement early if a partner fails to protect children.
- We share this policy with every partner and expect them to follow it.
- We introduce partners to the Travelife, Fair Trade Tourism and Uganda Tourism Board standards, and run short sessions on responsible tourism.
- We review key partners every year and agree improvements where needed.

> *"Ekilema abasaija bakikwataniza."*
> What is too heavy for one person, people lift together.
> — Rutooro proverb

5. Transport

Who this is for: *Drivers, guides and transport providers*

Long road journeys between Entebbe, Kampala, Fort Portal and the parks are our biggest source of emissions. We keep them clean, safe and efficient.

- Well-maintained, licensed and insured vehicles, whether our own or hired.
- Routes planned to avoid extra kilometres, with longer stays in fewer places.
- Engines off when waiting; safe speeds; marked tracks only inside parks.
- Vehicle size matched to group size.
- Lower-impact choices such as cycling safaris, guided walks and boat trips.
- Honest advice on the carbon impact of travel options, and at least one sustainable safari package.

> *"Atemerwe enjoka atina omunya."*
> One who has been bitten by a snake fears even a lizard. Experience teaches care on the road.
> — Rutooro proverb

6. Accommodation

Who this is for: *The lodges, hotels and camps we book*

Where our guests sleep matters for local jobs, water, energy and waste.

Must have	We prefer
A sustainability agreement, a child protection policy with trained staff, and health and safety training.	Locally owned lodges that employ and train people from nearby communities.

We look for	We reward
Water and energy saving, good waste management, and food bought from local farmers.	Travelife or GSTC-recognised certification, local culture and architecture, and support for community or conservation projects.

We end our relationship with any lodge that harms local access to water, food, energy, land or healthcare, or that fails to protect children.

> *"Akutwara ekiro omusima bukire."*
> The one who carries you through the night, you thank in the morning.
> — Rutooro proverb

7. Wildlife and excursions

Who this is for: *Guides, activity providers and guests*

Gorillas, chimpanzees, lions, elephants and hundreds of bird species bring guests to Uganda. Every visit should help protect them.

- We follow every Uganda Wildlife Authority rule, every time.
- No activities where wild animals are caged, ridden, handled or made to perform, apart from properly regulated rescue and conservation work.
- No dealings with anyone who hunts, sells or trades wildlife illegally.
- Guests are briefed before every wildlife activity.
- Your park fees help: 20% of park gate collections is shared with neighbouring communities.
- Skilled, licensed guides lead all visits to sensitive natural and cultural sites.

No orphanage visits. We do not offer visits to orphanages or children's homes, or short-term volunteering with children. Orphanage tourism can harm children. If you would like to help, ask us about community schools, health and women's projects.

> *"Enjojo teremwa musanga gayo."*
> An elephant is never too weak to carry its own tusks. We carry our duty to wildlife willingly.
> — Rutooro proverb

8. Community-based tourism

Who this is for: *Community hosts, guides and guests*

Our community excursions, cultural experiences and village stays let guests share daily life with the people of Tooro and the communities beside Uganda's parks: walking through farms and villages, cooking local food, learning crafts, music and dance, and listening to elders. These visits must bring income and pride, never turn people into a show.

Communities lead

- Every experience is designed with the community's own leaders or group.
- Communities can say no, limit visits, or keep places and ceremonies private.
- Batooro, Batwa and other cultures are presented with dignity, never as staged poverty.
- We ask before taking photos, and before using any image, song or design in our marketing.

Fair pay, real benefit

- Prices agreed in writing and paid directly and on time, ideally on the day.
- Guests can see what part of the price goes to the community.
- Local guides, cooks and hosts are hired first, with priority for women and young people.
- Visits are spread across households and groups so benefits are shared.

Growing together

- Small groups and an agreed visit schedule that respects farming and school.
- Safe, clean homestays with hosts who know our child protection rules.
- Practical mentoring in hospitality, pricing and safety, and links to AUWOTT and Uganda Tourism Board training.
- Yearly feedback from each community, and a published total of what was paid to community groups.

> *"Ekigambo ky'omukuru mukaro."*
> The word of an elder is like dried meat: its value lasts long after it is given. We listen to those who know the community best.
> — Rutooro proverb

9. Our guides and local team

Who this is for: *Guides, drivers, porters and cooks*

Our female and male guides, licensed by the Uganda Tourism Board, are what guests remember most.

Our commitments

- Local people from the areas we visit are hired first when skills are equal.
- Everyone is paid at least a living wage, with a written agreement they understand.
- Regular training on wildlife rules, cultural respect, waste and child protection.
- Porter groups and other partners must also follow Ugandan labour law.

What guides share with guests

- How to behave around wildlife, plants and protected areas.
- Local customs: dress, greetings, photography and tipping.
- Saving water and energy at lodges.
- How to spot and report child exploitation.
- Where to shop and eat so money stays local.

> *"Obutamanya ndwaire."*
> Ignorance is a sickness. Learning is the cure.
> — Rutooro proverb

10. Caring for the places we visit

Who this is for: *Our planners and partners*

Fort Portal, the crater lakes, the Rwenzori foothills and Kibale are our home. Tourism here should grow in a way local people welcome.

- We weigh environmental and social impact before adding any destination or activity.
- We promote quieter places such as Semliki, Kidepo Valley and the countryside around Fort Portal, to spread the benefits.
- We follow protected-area, heritage and planning rules and local tourism plans.
- We connect lodges with local farmers and producers.
- We work with the Uganda Tourism Board, AUTO and AUWOTT for good destination management, and support community health and conservation.
- We never sell or promote souvenirs made from endangered plants or animals, or historic artefacts.

> *"Enku osenya oyomire nizo oyota orwaire."*
> The firewood you gather while you are well is what warms you when you are sick. Care for tomorrow today.
> — Rutooro proverb

11. Child protection and human rights

Who this is for: *Everyone*

We have zero tolerance for the abuse, exploitation or trafficking of children, and for any abuse of human rights, in our office, on every trip and across our supply chain.

- We never work with suppliers who use child labour or exploit children, and our agreements let us end work with any that fail to protect them.
- Our whole team is trained on children's rights, warning signs and how to report.
- Please don't give money, sweets or gifts directly to children, and photograph them only with a parent's permission.
- We report every suspected case to the authorities.

See something worrying? Tell someone.

+256 774 056 769 **Your guide or our office, 24 hours** info@afrikapanthera.com	**116** **Uganda Child Helpline (Sauti)** Free of charge	**999 / 112** **Uganda Police** Or the nearest police station

> *"Eka teitwa bunaku, itwa okukuza kubi."*
> A home is not ruined by poverty; it is ruined by failing to raise and protect its children well.
> — Rutooro proverb

12. Our guests

Who this is for: *Our guests*

Every safari we plan is personal. You should know exactly what you are buying, and leave Uganda having done some good.

Before you book

- Clear, complete and honest information about trips, prices and what is included.

- No promises we can't keep, and no sustainability claims we can't back up.
- Greener travel options and responsible lodges pointed out so you can choose them.
- Your personal data protected under Uganda's Data Protection and Privacy Act.

Before and during your trip

- Information on nature, culture and heritage, and how to make a positive difference.
- Health and safety advice, including vaccinations, malaria and road travel.
- Guidance on respectful behaviour, and the rules on buying artefacts and wildlife products.
- Support 24 hours a day on +256 774 056 769.

After your trip

- We ask for your feedback, including on sustainability, and use it.
- Every complaint gets a prompt reply through a clear procedure.

> *"Amazima obugaija, ebisuba biruka."*
> When the truth arrives, lies run away.
> — Rutooro proverb

13. Keeping our word

Who this is for: *Everyone*

A policy only matters if it shows up on the road and in the office. This is how we make sure it does.

After every trip
Guides report any issues with wildlife, waste, child safety, suppliers or community visits. Community payments are recorded and guest feedback is reviewed.

Every month
Our team discusses one sustainability topic and records fuel, electricity, water and waste.

Every year
Our CEO and Sustainability Coordinator review this policy, our action plan and our suppliers, update the policy where needed, and publish the results.

Any time
Guests, partners, staff and neighbours can tell us how to do better at info@afrikapanthera.com.

> *"Ibaanja tirijuunda."*
> A debt does not rot away. A promise made stays owed until it is kept.
> — Rutooro proverb

Policy approval

This policy applies to everyone who works for or with Afrika Panthera Safaris: our staff, freelance guides and drivers, suppliers, partners and guests. It takes effect on the date below and will be