

## 2014/15 EXO Travel Annual Sustainability Report

### Introduction to our Sustainability Mission

EXO Travel is truly passionate about being a responsible travel company that genuinely cares about how our business impacts the people and places in which we operate. Our commitment towards sustainability was first marked by the establishment of the EXO Foundation in 2011, an apolitical, secular and independent not-for-profit organization.

This commitment was formally structured and systematized by our involvement in the **Travelife** scheme (<http://www.travelife.info/>), an international and independent certification process tailored towards encouraging tour companies to implement positive changes within their businesses and supply chain to reach sustainability. The scheme is based on 245 criteria addressing economic, social and environmental issues recognized by the GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council). These criteria cover all areas of a tourism business: internal management (human resources and social policy, and environment management), responsible product development, the supply chain (transport, accommodation, and activities), customer relations and cooperation with destinations. Therefore, it requires the involvement of all departments in the business. Importantly, Travelife certification acknowledges that sustainable tourism management is a gradual process, thus it helps to continuously improve the company's sustainability performance through a cycle of "plan, do and review".

It is widely accepted that "operating your business in a socially and environmentally friendly manner makes good business sense! Both consumer and business demand for responsible products is growing and the public wants to know how you manage your business" [source: Travelife].

The EXO Foundation has designed a variety of policies regarding sustainability. First and foremost, a Responsible Travel Policy was outlined in 2013. It was then followed by a number of other policies such as a Switching Off Policy, Paper Saving Policy, Waste Management Policy and a 41-page 'Tips on Responsible Travels' booklet to distribute to our clients upon arrival in Myanmar.

EXO Travel Myanmar started the Travelife certification process in December 2014 when the first expatriate Sustainability Coordinator was recruited for the Yangon office and progress has continued since then. A Sustainability Team (STeam) consisting of 28 volunteer staff members from the Yangon office has been active since April 2015 and is an essential vehicle for translating sustainability ideas into practice. Furthermore, a baseline assessment was carried out to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of our sustainability performance, thereby helping us to identify an action plan with targets, measures, responsibilities and time planning.

Priority was given to improving our internal management, including social policy and environmental management. After several months, we have achieved some major positive change within our operations such as improving our internal regulations, sorting and recycling waste, etc. We have also been communicating sustainability actions and involving our suppliers (accommodation and excursion providers). Our customers are being informed and advised on how to travel more responsibly both before and during their holiday in

Myanmar. We plan to have our first Travelife audit in May 2016, which will be our first milestone on this march towards sustainability.

## Memorandum: EXO's main documents regarding sustainability

- **Responsible Travel Policy:** [www.exotravel.com/images/exo-story/EXO-RTP-2015.pdf](http://www.exotravel.com/images/exo-story/EXO-RTP-2015.pdf)
- **Ethical Code:** <http://www.exotravel.com/images/exo-story/EXO-Travel-Ethical-code.pdf>
- **Guidelines for Wildlife Viewing and Protection:** <http://www.exotravel.com/images/exo-story/Wildlife-EXO-codes-of-conduct.pdf>
- **Tips for Responsible Travel:** [http://www.exofoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Exocares\\_EN\\_2014\\_demo-5.pdf](http://www.exofoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Exocares_EN_2014_demo-5.pdf)

### 1. Internal management: Social policy and human rights

At EXO, “we commit to our people” meaning that we ensure human rights for all workers, and provide training and educational materials to assist with professional development. This involves abiding by local labour regulations such as ensuring the right of our workers to participate in trade union discussions, and also paying a fair living wage to all employees and refusing child labour while also encouraging our suppliers to do the same.

#### 133 MEMBERS OF FULL-TIME STAFF

**Head office:** Yangon – 120 staff

**Operational offices:** Bagan, Inle Lake, Mandalay – 13 staff

Male: 32

Female: 101

**Local: 127**

**Expatriate:** 6 (General Manager, Product Manager, French Inbound Manager, Spanish & Latin America Inbound Manager, Events Manager and Sustainability Coordinator)

Our Employee Handbook which contains information about all our internal regulations was revised at the beginning of 2016. This handbook is a Group level document but is adapted to take into consideration the local regulations in each country. The following information includes changes that were made in Myanmar:

#### Living wage

- We recently updated our staff contracts and Employee Handbook in accordance with recently amended labour laws. This led to an increase in the lowest monthly salary for any staff member by 25%. We strive to ensure that our staff earn a salary that is enough to support the living costs of themselves and their family.

## Medical insurance

- A new policy for local staff members from the same broker (Gras Savoye Willis Vietnam) was introduced in June 2015. This is on top of the fixed 5% contribution (3% from the company, 2% from the employee) to the Social Security Board (SSB) which contributes to medical and social insurance as stipulated in the labour law for all employees.

## Maternity leave

- We have updated our staff contracts and Employee Handbook in accordance with recently amended labour laws. This ensures that all female staff are eligible to 14 weeks of paid maternity leave.

## Interns

- We started hosting interns in 2013 and have since had 3 international interns and 2 local interns from the National Management College in Yangon. It is important for us to provide learning opportunities to students as they are the future of the fast-developing tourism industry in Myanmar.

## *2016 Action Plan:*

- Partner with Yangon's National Management College to encourage more local internship applications through their tourism degree programme.

## Training and education

As a service and customer-focused business, our people are our most valuable asset. Therefore we invest in training to empower our people, to get the best out of them and to encourage them to achieve their full potential. We promote a culture of passion, innovation, sharing and caring, life-long learning in EXO Travel. This is underlined by our annual EXO Academy training conducted by Mekong Train Coaching Agency (<http://www.mekongtrain.com/>). The training is customized every year and based on various topics such as teamwork, time management, planning, productivity, etc.

## Sustainability training and education

We want our staff to become action-makers and decision-takers when it comes to sustainability issues and it is for this reason that trainings on sustainability and Responsible Tourism have also been conducted during recent years. This is very important to us because **we want sustainability to be engrained within the company culture**. The main reason we are undertaking the Travelife certification process is to motivate our staff to think about sustainability throughout all aspects of the business and raise awareness of key issues to consider.

- In 2013 and 2014 a presentation was given by the EXO Foundation to all Yangon staff members about Responsible Tourism and how EXO is getting involved with the Travelife certification scheme.
- 50 members of Yangon office staff (including ALL managers) passed the online **Travelife training** in October 2014.
- All key documents such as our Responsible Travel Policy, Ethical Code, Guidelines for Wildlife Viewing and Protection, and EXO Saving Tips (discussed in 'Internal management: Environment and community relations') are clearly communicated to staff via email and the EXO 24 intranet service
- Since 2015, new staff are introduced to Responsible Tourism and Travelife during the induction training provided by HR. They are also introduced to the Responsible Travel Policy and EXO Saving Tips.
- Our **STeam** was set up in April 2015 and consists of at least one staff member from each department: (Product, English Inbound, French Inbound, German Inbound, Spanish & Latin America Inbound,

Adventure, Events, Administration, Accounting, Human Resources, Tourplan, Operations, IT). At present, there are **28 members of the team**. Meetings are arranged twice per month and the objective is to empower team members and make them more familiar with sustainability concepts. They become ambassadors for sustainability within the company and convey their knowledge to fellow members of their department.



*EXO Myanmar STeam & Sustainability Coordinator, November 2015*

**Examples of topics discussed during STeam meetings:** Saving energy, Reducing paper usage, Reducing waste, Recycling and ‘upcycling’, celebrating the New Year responsibly

- The monthly EXO Sustainability Game was launched in Myanmar in November 2015. This consists of a quiz and mission based on a particular theme which all staff are invited to take part in online.



*EXO Sustainability Game poster*

The themes covered so far have been: Responsible Tourism, Helping the Local Community & Climate Change. We had a total of 58 players over the two months when the Game was played at the end of 2015. This constitutes over 20% of all our staff which is a very good commitment considering that the game was launched right at the beginning of Myanmar's peak tourist season. We are optimistic that even more players will take part during the low season when workloads are reduced. The Game is played with EXO's other Travelife countries and a 'Most Responsible Employee' will be decided at the end of 2016. Monthly prizes with a sustainable twist are awarded in Myanmar to the players with the highest score for that particular month.

- Our weekly Fun Fact about Sustainability was launched at the end of 2015 and is clearly communicated to all staff via the intranet. Clear facts are presented with a simple solution to promote more sustainable behavior amongst staff:



*Examples of a Friday Fun Fact about Sustainability post*

#### *2016 Action Plan:*

- ChildSafe (<http://thinkchildsafe.org/>) child protection training for office staff and guides to raise awareness about child safety issues in tourism – the objective is to start with our 100 guides in Yangon because they are the ones who accompany our clients on tours around the company, spending the most amount of time with them and therefore having the greatest influence over their actions.
- Responsible product training for Sales staff to ensure they are aware of and able to promote the benefits of our most responsible products to clients, thereby incentivizing the sustainable actions of certain suppliers.
- Launch the quarterly Sustainability Newsletter in March 2016.
- Encourage new managers/supervisors and all STeam members to also undertake and pass the Travelife online training during low-season.

Until now, sustainability training has had a heavy focus on environmental management as this has involved factors that we can directly influence in the office. Our staff have been provided with a good knowledge base. We would like them to use this to face the next challenge – motivating our suppliers to adopt more sustainable practices in order that we can have a positive influence on our supply chain. Both our internal and external activities will be covered in the sections that follow.

## 2. Internal management: Environment

Internal environmental management is very important in our office because it sensitizes staff to environmental issues and instills good habits in them. We are keen to create an environmentally and socially conscious

workforce which can then instill these principles in their daily work to help EXO Travel Myanmar become a more responsible company throughout all departments.

The following policy documents are clearly and regularly communicated to staff:

- Waste management
- Energy consumption
- Paper consumption
- Water consumption

Central to all our efforts is the **Monitoring Tool** used to record our consumption with regards to all the above themes. The tool is regularly updated and is very important to us because “we can only improve what we measure!” In light of this information, please find below a brief summary of our progress on various environmental management fronts.

### **Waste management**

There are currently no facilities for recycling waste in Myanmar. Nevertheless, EXO Myanmar is taking responsibility for setting an example by doing our absolute utmost to ensure as little “waste” as possible is wasted. As the great Albert Einstein famously said: “Setting an example is not the main means of influencing others, it is the only means.”

- All our pantry waste is separated according to the following categories: **wet waste, dry waste, instant coffee packets, plastic bottles, aluminium cans**. We regularly remind staff to bring recyclable waste down to the pantry rather than depositing it in their personal bins.



*Waste bins in the pantry with clear signs in English & Burmese*

- Used individual coffee packets are sent to the Mary Chapman School for the Deaf on a monthly basis. The school uses these as a raw material to create handicrafts in their training workshop:



*Handbag made using old coffee packets – a great example of upcycling!*

- Used aluminium cans are sent to Pomelo (<http://www.pomelomyanmar.org/>) on a monthly basis. The social enterprise sends these to its suppliers who use them to create innovative products.
- Staff have been sensitized about the negative health and environmental impacts of polystyrene and are requesting caterers for private office events to bring reusable plates rather than polystyrene boxes. The vast majority of staff also brings reusable lunch boxes to work rather than transporting it in disposable boxes.
- Housekeeping staff sell accumulated used plastic bottles and paper to informal waste collectors who recycle these products. This raises awareness that “waste is not waste” and in fact has a value.

#### *2016 Action Plan:*

- Begin monitoring our monthly recyclable and non-recyclable waste production.
- Identify further options for recycling/‘upcycling’ our waste to reduce our production of non-recyclable waste.
- Install paper towel dispensers in all office bathrooms to help staff use just one paper towel every time they wash their hands. This is something we have already trained staff to do using the “shake and fold” method which involves shaking one’s hands 12 times after washing and then folding one paper towel to dry the hands. We try to find innovative solutions such as this to issues which can otherwise seem cumbersome to employees. *Sustainability should be fun!*
- Reduce our non-recyclable waste production by 20%.

#### Energy consumption

- All staff are sensitized to our clearly communicated **Energy Saving** and **Switch Off policies** so they turn off all electrical equipment before leaving the office.

## Lights

- Turn off the lights, when you leave
- Use daylight, when sunny outside!

## Air-conditioning

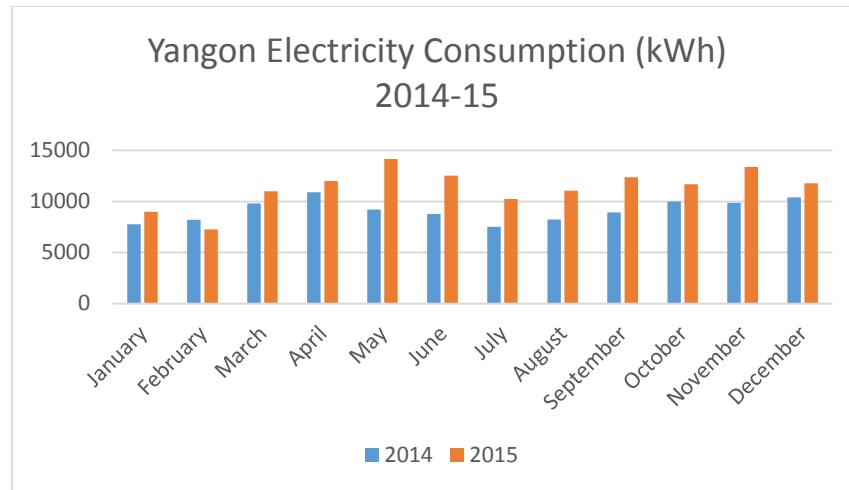
- Close doors/windows when air-conditioning is switch on
- Use recommendation directly on remote or Air-conditioning device
- Feeling too hot?!! Require a fan ☺

## Computer

- Switch off when you leave our work station.
- Unplug all electrical appliances for week-ends and holidays.

## *EXO Energy Reduction Policy*

- All computers have been set to energy saving mode – computer screen turns off after 15 minutes and computer goes to sleep after 30 minutes.
- The IT department has been sensitized about buying low energy equipment and allowances for such equipment have been included in the 2016 budget proposal.
- Monthly electricity consumption was monitored using our Resource Monitoring Tool:



- Our electricity consumption increased by 24.6% from 2014 to 2015. This is a clear sign that greater sensitization of our staff towards energy saving measures is required, alongside correct maintenance of all electrical equipment in the office to ensure efficiency.

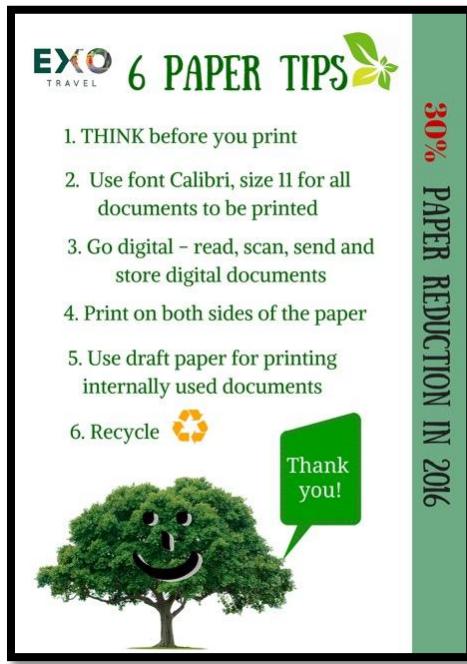
## *2016 Action Plan:*

- Start shifting to low-energy equipment.
- Place stickers at key points around the office to encourage people to switch lights and electrical equipment off.

- Discuss corrective measures with the STeam to ensure we see a reduction in our energy consumption in 2016.

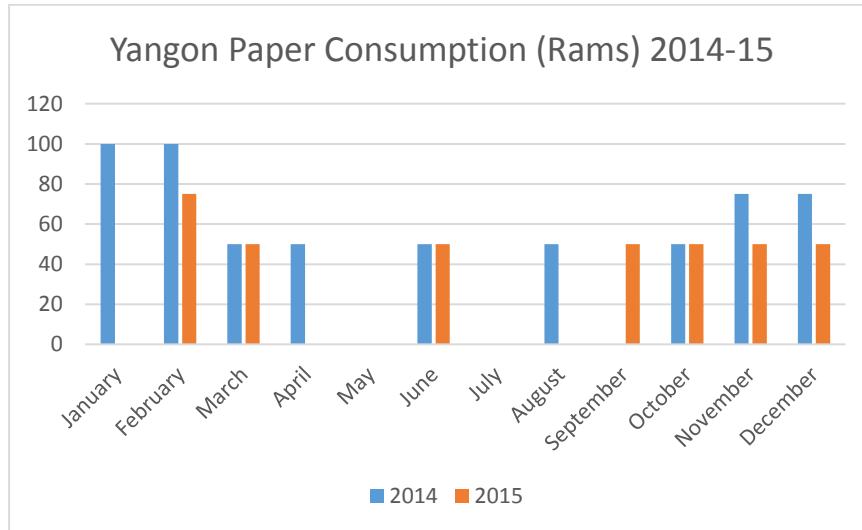
### Paper consumption

- All staff members have been trained to print double-sided, use Calibri font size 11 for all hard and soft documents, and send documents online whenever possible.



### *EXO Paper Reduction Policy*

- We use ISO 9001 and 14001 certified paper which is PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) certified (<http://www.pefc.org/>).
- Staff are trained to use printed paper as draft paper or to print one-sided documents.
- Monthly electricity consumption was monitored using our Resource Monitoring Tool:



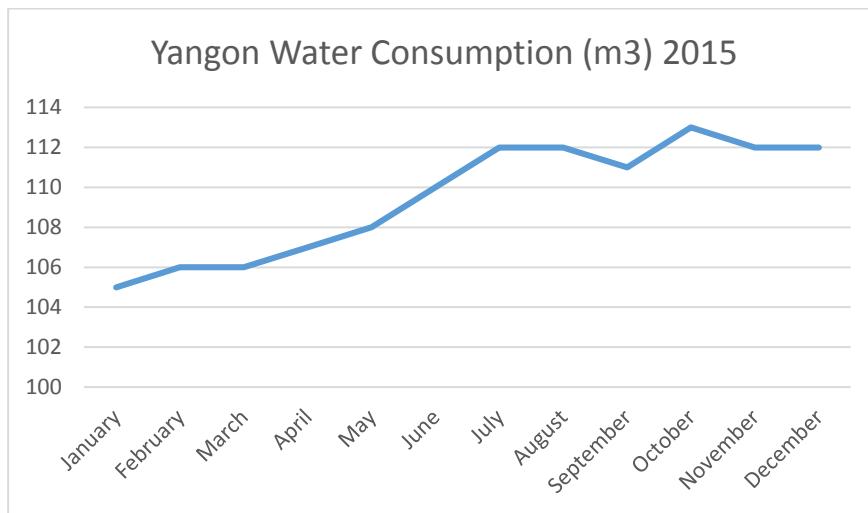
- Our paper consumption reduced by 37.5% from 2014 to 2015. This translates to a reduction of 4 pages per person per day. A 60 foot pine tree produces 80,000 sheets of paper which means we saved 1 ½ of these trees as an office in the whole in 2015. *Now that is very green indeed!*

#### *2016 Action Plan:*

- Set all office to printers to double-sided printing as default in coordination with the IT department.
- Further reduce our paper consumption by 30%.

#### Water consumption

- *No data available for 2014*
- Monthly electricity consumption in 2015 was monitored using our Resource Monitoring Tool:



- The gradual increase in our consumption over the course of 2015 is disappointing however it must be remembered that the issue of water saving is one that is yet to be addressed on a technical level due to the limited actions we can take as tenants of the office building we are renting. Staff are naturally sensitive to the issue because of the regularity of water shortages in Yangon.

#### *2016 Action Plan:*

- Encourage office building owner to invest in the installation of water saving facilities to help reduce water consumption.
- Reduce our water consumption by 10%, if required changes are permitted.

#### Carbon offsetting

- It has been calculated that in 2015, EXO Travel Myanmar staff flew a total of 241,237 km for business purposes. This amounts to total CO2 emissions of 34.03 tonnes and the cost of offsetting these emissions will be \$612.54.

#### *2016 Action Plan:*

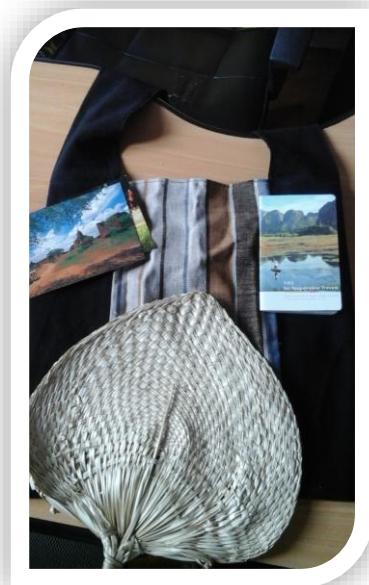
- Partner with NEXUS (<http://www.nexusfordevelopment.org/>) to help us offset our carbon emissions from business flights by contributing to projects promoting environmental sustainability.

## Sustainable purchasing



### *EXO Sustainable Purchasing Policy*

- Sustainability criteria are strongly considered in awarding the Sustainability Game prizes. This leads to an increased awareness about sustainably-sourced goods amongst staff.
- Our client welcome pack includes a Shan bag made by local people in Ywa Ma Village near Inle Lake and a fan made from natural palm materials. These are practical items which travelers can use during their stay in Myanmar that also showcase the work of local artisans:



### *Contents of Clients Welcome Pack*

- Our staff purchase local coffee for consumption in the office because it's delicious and supports local coffee farmers.
- We have implemented chemical-free office cleaning materials. That means a mixture of one or more of water, vinegar and baking soda to make our toilets, sinks, mirrors, windows and floors squeaky clean. And no, our office does not smell bad ☺

#### *2016 Action Plan:*

- Implement sustainability criteria in other staff giveaways e.g. birthday presents

There is currently a rather basic level of understanding in Myanmar when it comes to environmental responsibility and we are very proud of our environmental initiatives as we hope to create a ripple effect whereby these principles spread from our staff to our suppliers and the families and friends of staff. Nevertheless, it is important that we are realistic in creating targets to improve our environmental sustainability. We have recently begun to implement a number of procedures so can expect to see high levels of improvement, however this will reduce over time as it is impossible to keep reducing consumption at the same rate.

### 3. Developing responsible products

As a large destination management company (DMC), our greatest positive impact can be made by working closely with our suppliers to increase the level of sustainability throughout the supply chain. Our primary suppliers are accommodation and excursion providers. Success in this task depends on prior training and awareness raising among in-house staff so they are in a position to help our suppliers implement sustainable actions. This is where the benefits of our internal sustainability management procedures will be demonstrated.

#### Accommodations

In 2015 a strategy was designed to communicate, assess and promote sustainability within the accommodations we work with. It involves 6 steps:

- Communicate our march towards sustainability by sharing our RTP and core commitments
- Assess level of sustainability of our main suppliers to identify the responsible ones and those interested to implement best practices
- Review and validation by the EXO Foundation of responsible suppliers
- Qualify in our internal booking database suppliers identified as responsible
- Highlight these responsible suppliers to offer an informed choice to clients with special icons
- Monitoring our performance in selling responsible suppliers
- To start this process, a total of 80 accommodation suppliers (our top 75% in terms of room night bookings) were sent our **Sustainability in Actions** document, **Sustainability Contract Addendum** and a link to our **Sustainability Questionnaire** in November 2015.
- Our Sustainability in Actions document informs suppliers of our Responsible Travel Policy and our commitment towards sustainability.
- Our Sustainability Contract Addendum covers basic requirements regarding human rights, environmental protection and governance.
- Our Sustainability Questionnaire (<https://www.research.net/r/?sm=ZVbZ0zGYCiG8YAuUVD4yWg%3d%3d>) comprises 35 questions based on major activity areas covering internal HR, socio-economic benefits for the local community, environmental protection, guest communication and heritage conservation. The questionnaire helps

us evaluate the level of commitment shown by our partner hotels and provides them with a checklist of issues to consider when implementing sustainability into their daily operations.

- Please find below the response rate so far:

SUSTAINABILITY CONTRACT ADDENDUM & QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO TOP 75% OF HOTELS					
Destination	No. of hotels emailed	No. of addendums signed		No. of questionnaires completed	
<b>YANGON</b>	20	6	30%	5	25%
<b>BAGAN</b>	19	3	16%	3	16%
<b>INLE</b>	15	5	33%	5	33%
<b>MANDALAY</b>	16	2	13%	1	6%
<b>NGAPALI</b>	10	3	30%	3	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21%</b>

#### *2016 Action Plan:*

- Coordinate with the EXO Myanmar Contracting team to follow up with accommodation providers who have not signed the Sustainability Contract Addendum to ensure that all our suppliers have signed this basic requirement. We expect to have it signed by 100% of all accommodation partners.
- Conduct personal sustainability inspection visits at our Top 20 hotels (in terms of room night bookings).
- Integrate six key sustainability questions into inspections done by other staff to improve our general knowledge of the sustainability of our partners.
- Generate a more collaborative approach to stimulate our current suppliers towards more sustainability, such as partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), education institutes and/or other tour operators to facilitate workshops on sustainability to raise awareness as well as share knowledge and best practices.

#### Excursions and activities

We apply a slightly different process to assess our excursion suppliers to the one we use with our accommodation partners. It is much more complicated assessing excursions compared to hotels because of the longer, more complex questionnaire (more of a checklist) which includes 62 questions covering various aspects of a tour: transport, food & drink, shopping, child policy, social empowerment, social, cultural and economic benefits/impacts for the visited communities, conservation & environmental impacts. Furthermore, many excursion suppliers understand only basic English and may not understand the questions. Finally, it is difficult to have one check list which fits all types of excursions – a river cruise trip cannot be assessed the same way as a trekking excursion, for example. So the checklist will only be sent to suppliers we foresee as responsible (or claiming to be) and who can communicate in English. For others, the Sustainability Coordinator (accompanied by a Burmese-speaker) and local staff will directly go on inspection trips.

- School and orphanage visits were banned by the EXO Group and are no longer encouraged, promoted or sold by Sales staff. Clear guidelines have been published for Sales staff that receive requests for visits to such no-go excursions from agents or clients.
- EXO Travel is also working together with the Travelife working group to advocate against no-go excursions, such as elephants camps – very popular in Asia – that mistreat their elephants.

- EXO Travel has created guidelines for evaluating the responsibility of elephant camps and these have been used with our main elephant camp partner.
- Preliminary research was done at the end of 2015 into CIT (Community Involved Tourism) tours that can be integrated into our packages to make them more responsible.

*2016 Action Plan:*

- Communicate Sustainability in Actions and Sustainability Contract Addendum to ALL excursion suppliers and motivate them to work with us on this.
- Create a list of our responsible excursion suppliers and assess these using our questionnaire and/or an inspection trip.
- Research and promote ‘experiential’ alternatives to school/orphanage visits that can be promoted to the increasing number of tourists desiring such visits within their SE Asia itineraries.
- Through various meetings and conferences the Sustainability Coordinator has an overview of the CIT products on offer in Myanmar and will collaborate with the EXO Myanmar Product team to inspect and integrate new projects into packages.
- Promote our business flights carbon offsetting scheme to clients once it has been finalized to encourage them to do the same for their flights to and from SE Asia.
- Collaborate with Product team to put together a list of sensitive excursions within Myanmar and provide Sales staff with this information so they can inform clients. It is essential that the policies we create as a company have a positive impact on the ground. One example of this is to evaluate more elephant camps in Myanmar using the EXO guidelines.

**Transport**

International flights are the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions from transport. EXO Myanmar does not organize such flights for our clients, however we are dedicated to offering sustainable means of transport for our clients in-country because this contributes to our product range and also reduces negative impacts on the beautiful environment we have here:

- Apart from a variety of cycling and trekking tours, EXO Myanmar also offers E-bike and Ox-cart tours in the popular tourist destination of Bagan. Our Product team is also working closely with suppliers in Inle Lake to provide kayaking tours as an alternative to the polluting and noisy tourist boats.
- We have developed Standard Operating Procedures containing important information about sustainability for our drivers and these are distributed to all our transport suppliers.

*2016 Action Plan:*

- Produce small sustainability posters (without our logos so car companies can keep it when renting the cars to other tour companies) to place inside cars.
- Encourage clients to offset their carbon emissions for domestic and regional flights.

**Promoting our responsible product suppliers**

Part of our process of engaging suppliers in our Responsible Tourism initiative is to offer incentives to our responsible partners. We have designed icons to highlight responsible suppliers in all our communications. There are two labels, one for environmental best practices and one for social best practices:



*Icon denoting 'environmental' responsibility*



*Icon denoting 'social' responsibility*

Once a hotel's commitment to sustainability is recognized, it will be labeled in our information system. Our employees, especially our travel consultants have been informed about EXO's Responsible Travel Policy, as well as our sustainability assessment along our value chain.

#### *2016 Action Plan:*

- After a hotel's commitment to sustainability is assessed and recognized, we will label this on our internal database and train Sales staff to recognize these logos on our booking systems and promote responsible suppliers to our clients. We aim to increase sales of products identified as 'responsible' by 10% over the course of the year.

The process of working with our suppliers is a long one and it has to be if we wish to create a long-term positive impact. The first step of this process was to work with our accommodation suppliers due to the more straightforward nature of communication with them. We are now in a position to start working with our excursion suppliers and this will be a priority during the first half of 2016. As a DMC, the products we are able to offer define our business and that is why close cooperation between the Sustainability Coordinator, Product team and all other departments will be essential in encouraging others to join us on our mission.

## 4. Customer communication

We are a B2B company meaning that the end traveler in Myanmar is not a direct client. Our direct clients are the travel agents who communicate with the travelers. Nevertheless, we understand our in-country responsibility and believe that an informed customer is one that has a better experience in Myanmar. It is for this reason that we have developed the EXO Tips for Responsible Tourism booklet to encourage clients to be more sensitive travelers and have a more enjoyable experience in doing so.

The following information is communicated to our agents on a group level, providing them with the means to convey our principles to the end traveler:

- Responsible Travel Policy
- Ethical Code
- Guidelines for Wildlife Viewing & Protection
- Ban on visits to schools and orphanages
- EXO Foundation website
- Pro Guide
- E-Newsletter

### EXO Tips for Responsible Travels

- This booklet is distributed to clients arriving in Myanmar and our Operations team is heavily involved in the process. In 2015, a total of 1990 booklets were distributed and this meant that at least 1 in 5 of all our clients were reached. The following topics are covered within the booklet:
  - Respecting local culture
  - Child protection
  - Contributing to poverty alleviation
  - Responsible spending
  - Respecting the local environment
  - List of Fair Trade shops

### *2016 Action Plan:*

- Coordinate with Operations department to collect information regarding clients that are receiving the EXO Tips for Responsible Tourism booklet to better monitor and manage distribution.
- Work closely with agents to raise awareness of the booklet to ensure that at least 1 in 4 of all our clients are reached.

## 5. Corporate social responsibility

Sustainability is a core principle of the work that we do and we are proud of our commitment to helping local disadvantaged communities and the environment by making donations and providing further assistance when required.

## Donations

- Funds from the EXO Foundation are used to support two social projects in Myanmar:

1. **Ah Lett Chaung Clinic, Yangon - \$3,300 per year**
2. **Maung Shwe Lay Library, Rakhine State - \$1,000 per year**

EXO Myanmar is responsible for coordinating the distribution of these funds and reporting to the Foundation on activities at both projects. We adopt a pro-active strategy to ensure needs are quickly met and maintain a close relationship with the community. The Sustainability Coordinator is in regular contact with those involved with the projects and this includes visits at least every year.



*Maung Shwe Lay Village Committee*

- Ah Lett Chaung Clinic was set up due to the dire situation in the village following Cyclone Nargis in 2008. The contribution made by EXO Myanmar to this cause led to the formation of the EXO Foundation.



*Entrance to Clinic*

- EXO Myanmar facilitated the donation of \$10,000 from the EXO Foundation to help the victims of the August 2015 flooding. In addition to this, EXO Myanmar provide personnel to help with the relief effort. Our IT Manager, for example, assisted with the re-connection of IT equipment which was essential in communicating with organisations coming from afar to provide help.



*Truck used to transport aid from EXO Myanmar office in Yangon to flood victims*

#### *2016 Action Plan:*

- Identify further projects in need that could benefit from EXO Foundation funding in cooperation with local staff who have the required knowledge.

EXO Myanmar is not a social enterprise, however we are very committed to running a profitable business that is not merely passively respectful but actively involved in community development and conservation efforts. We believe in our CSR activities but they are just a kick starter to mobilize our staff to get involved in a wider range of actions inside and outside of the office to create a wider positive impact.

## Conclusion

We strongly believe that sustainability can only be achieved when it is integrated into the core structure of our business. It is not an “add-on”. It must be part of our decision-making process. This means that we will commit to a continuous improvement in all aspects of our business regarding sustainability.

The adoption of sustainability in our business enhances team spirit and collaboration among departments across our organization making EXO Travel a special place to work. Our employees are proud of being part of a meaningful movement – a higher purpose.

As one of the first destination management companies committing to sustainability in Myanmar, we hope to become leaders in the industry by promoting responsible tourism and influencing perspectives on the sustainable development of tourism in Myanmar. We look forward to the Travelife certification process but this is just the beginning of the adventure. The road will surely be a rocky one but we are extremely optimistic and excited to face the challenge.