



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Photo credit: www.freepik.com

DELIVERABLE: 2.11 OUTDOORS TOURISM CLUSTER OPERATIONAL AND SAFETY STANDARDS GUIDE

December 16, 2021

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Chemonics International Inc.

USAID DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ACTIVITY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA [TURIZAM]

DELIVERABLE: 2.11
OUTDOORS TOURISM CLUSTER OPERATIONAL AND SAFETY STANDARDS
GUIDE

December 2021

Prepared for USAID/Bosnia and Herzegovina
C/O American Embassy
I Roberta C. Frasure Street, Sarajevo BiH

Prepared by:
Chemonics International Inc.
USAID Developing Sustainable Tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Turizam)
Dzavida Haverica 5
Sarajevo BiH

Turizam is funded under USAID Contract No. 72016820C00004 and is implemented by Chemonics International in collaboration with:

Subcontractors:

Enova doo Sarajevo
SEGURA Consulting LLC

And IDIQ Partners:

Culture Practice LLC
LixCap Advisory and Capital
Zavod Tovarna trajnostnega turizma (Good Place)
Horwath i Horwath Consulting Zagreb d.o.o.
Crimson Capital

DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms	1
Definitions	2
Executive Summary	3
Methodology	5
OPERATIONAL AND SAFETY STANDARD FOR HIKING	6
1 LEGAL COMPLIANCE	6
1.1 Legislation and regulations.....	6
1.2 Licenses.....	7
1.3 Protected and sensitive areas.....	7
2 SAFETY MANAGEMENT	7
2.1 Safety policy.....	8
2.2 Safety goals and objectives.....	8
2.3 Documentation.....	8
2.4 Commitment.....	8
2.5 Staff.....	9
2.6 Communication.....	9
2.7 Emergencies.....	9
2.8 Incidents.....	9
3 RISK MANAGEMENT	10
3.1 Context of each activity.....	10
3.2 Risk assessment.....	10
3.3 Risk treatment.....	11
4 HIKING GUIDES	11
4.1 Competencies.....	11
4.2 Skills and qualifications.....	11
5 SUSTAINABILITY	13
5.1 Sustainability policy.....	13
5.2 Impacts on nature.....	14
5.3 Single-use plastics.....	14
5.4 Human rights.....	14
5.5 Animal welfare.....	14
5.6 Best practices and communication.....	15
5.7 Local community support.....	15
6 CUSTOMER SERVICE	15
6.1 Safety information.....	15
6.2 Data protection.....	16

6.3 Guest satisfaction.....	16
6.4 Complaint procedure.....	16
7 QUALITY	16
7.1 Quality assurance policy.....	16
8 COVID-19.....	17
8.1 Recommendations and regulations.....	17
8.2 Social distancing.....	17
8.3 Cleaning and disinfection.....	17
8.4 Hand washing.....	18
8.5 Health screening.....	18
8.6 Emergency response	18
8.7 Amendment of policies.....	18
OPERATIONAL AND SAFETY STANDARD FOR CYCLING	19
1 LEGAL COMPLIANCE	19
1.1 Legislation and regulations.....	19
1.2 Licenses	19
1.3 Protected and sensitive areas.....	20
2 SAFETY MANAGEMENT.....	20
2.1 Safety policy.....	21
2.2 Safety goals and objectives.....	21
2.3 Documentation.....	21
2.4 Commitment.....	21
2.5 Staff.....	22
2.6 Communication	22
2.7 Emergencies.....	22
2.8 Incidents	22
3 RISK MANAGEMENT	23
3.1 Context of each activity	23
3.2 Risk assessment.....	23
3.3 Risk treatment	24
4 CYCLING GUIDES.....	24
4.1 Competencies	24
4.2 Skills and qualifications.....	24
5 SUSTAINABILITY.....	26
5.1 Sustainability policy.....	26
5.2 Impacts on nature	27
5.3 Single-use plastics	27

5.4 Human rights.....	27
5.5 Animal welfare.....	27
5.6 Best practices and communication.....	28
5.7 Local community support.....	28
6 CUSTOMER SERVICE.....	28
6.1 Safety information.....	28
6.2 Data protection.....	29
6.3 Guest satisfaction.....	29
6.4 Complaint procedure.....	29
7 QUALITY.....	29
7.1 Quality assurance policy.....	29
8 COVID-19.....	30
8.1 Recommendations and regulations.....	30
8.2 Social distancing.....	30
8.3 Cleaning and disinfection.....	31
8.4 Hand washing.....	31
8.5 Health screening.....	31
8.6 Emergency response.....	31
8.7 Amendment of policies.....	31
OPERATIONAL AND SAFETY STANDARD FOR RAFTING.....	32
1 LEGAL COMPLIANCE.....	32
1.1 Legislation and regulations.....	32
1.2 Licenses.....	33
1.3 Protected and sensitive areas.....	33
2 SAFETY MANAGEMENT.....	33
2.1 Safety policy.....	34
2.2 Safety goals and objectives.....	34
2.3 Documentation.....	34
2.4 Commitment.....	35
2.5 Staff.....	35
2.6 Communication.....	35
2.7 Emergencies.....	35
2.8 Incidents.....	36
3 RISK MANAGEMENT.....	36
3.1 Context of each activity.....	36
3.2 Risk assessment.....	36
3.3 Risk treatment.....	37

4 RAFTING GUIDES.....	37
4.1 Competencies	37
4.2 Skills and qualifications.....	38
5 SUSTAINABILITY.....	40
5.1 Sustainability policy.....	40
5.2 Impacts on nature	40
5.3 Single-use plastics.....	40
5.4 Human rights.....	41
5.5 River protection.....	41
5.6 Best practices and communication	41
5.7 Local community support	42
6 CUSTOMER SERVICE.....	42
6.1 Safety information	42
6.2 Data protection.....	42
6.3 Guest satisfaction.....	42
6.4 Complaint procedure.....	42
7 QUALITY	44
7.1 Quality assurance policy.....	44
8 COVID-19.....	44
8.1 Recommendations and regulations.....	44
8.2 Social distancing.....	44
8.3 Cleaning and disinfection.....	45
8.4 Hand washing.....	45
8.5 Health screening.....	45
8.6 Emergency response	45
8.7 Amendment of policies.....	46
ANNEXES.....	47
ANNEX I: Safety Management in Short.....	47
ANNEX II: Emergency Response Plan.....	47
ANNEX III: Risk Management in Short.....	48
ANNEX IV: Sustainability Policy Template.....	49
ANNEX V: Quality Assurance Policy Template.....	49
REFERENCES.....	51

ACRONYMS

ATTA	Adventure Travel Trade Association
BD	Brčko District
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
EU	European Union
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
IMBA	International Mountain Bicycling Association
IRF	International Rafting Federation
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
OG	Official Gazette
RS	Republika Srpska
SMS	Safety Management System
UIMLA	Union of International Mountain Leaders Association

DEFINITIONS

Activity provider is a commercial body (for profit) or non-commercial body (not-for-profit / community group) which undertakes to provide an activity.

Adventure travel guide is a guide with a general knowledge of a variety of skill competencies (i.e. interpretive, medical and sustainability) required to facilitate a group of clients through a range of terrains, environments and locales in a safe, manageable and respectable manner.

Emergency is a serious situation requiring immediate action.

Incident is an event leading to an accident or having such potential.

Participant is a person whose welfare is the responsibility of leader or assistant leader and/or who participates in an activity for recreational or educational purposes but not in a leadership role.

Risk is a potential event that could cause harm.

Safety Management System (SMS) is a management system with a focus on safety, whereby management system is a set of interacting elements within an organization to establish policies and objectives, and the processes to achieve these objectives.

Sustainability in tourism: Sustainable tourism takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recognition of the importance of the outdoor tourism cluster in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) as an important contributor to the country's economic development, the USAID Developing Sustainable Tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Turizam) developed the *Outdoor Tourism Cluster Plan-Bosnia Green* (contract deliverable 1.10). This plan lays out opportunities to capitalize on BiH nature assets to fuel adventure and community-based tourism in a safe and sustainable manner. Turizam also developed the *Adventure Tourism Certification Plan* to provide adventure tourism stakeholders with international best practices that can be ascribed to by pursuing internationally recognized certifications (contract deliverable 2.8). This third and final document presents the *Outdoors Tourism Cluster Operational and Safety Standards Guide* (contract deliverable 2.11) to provide adventure tourism industry operators in priority segments with specific guidelines on how to adopt and adhere to internationally recognized safety standards in operations.

Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) defines adventure tourism as a type of tourism that “includes at least two of the following three components: a physical activity, a cultural exchange or interaction and engagement with nature.”¹ This segment of tourism is a global industry growing in importance and is one of the fastest-growing sectors of tourism. Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has great potential for development in this area but it faces several challenges which hinder its development, visibility, recognizability and quality. The following are also factors:

- Legislation varies between different parts of the country; compliance and enforcement of regulations and policies are lacking.
- The presence of international standards, certifications, and trainings in the country is minimal and inconsistent.
- Development of safe and green experiences is often hindered by insufficiently trained staff and lack of attention given to the environment to ensure its conservation and safeguarding.
- The quality and content of BiH's adventure tourism offer is limited; inconsistencies in supply and service standards, product gaps, and unrealized potential of high-value tourism products indicates numerous gaps in the capacity of the private sector.
- No special standards and practice aiming to assess and manage risks linked to adventure tourism are known to be in place.

¹ Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) defines adventure tourism as a type of tourism that “includes at least two of the following three components: a physical activity, a cultural exchange or interaction and engagement with nature.” <https://www.adventuretravel.biz/education/adventure-education/guide-standards/adventure-travel-guide-qualifications-performance-standard-iii-definitions/>

With the plan to develop and promote adventure clusters, improve existing and develop new experiences, and - as a response to some of the issues above - meet minimum requirements for a safety management system for adventure tourism activity providers, including covid-19 protocols, three adventure tourism activities were chosen: hiking, cycling and white-water rafting.

The standard will not replace the need for stricter and more consistent legislation and more policies regulating adventure tourism activities, but it will give some concrete guidance to activity providers. It will also not solve the issue of lack of international standards, but since it is based on international best practices, it will provide internationally recognized guidance and criteria.

Indirectly, implementation of this standard will contribute to better-trained staff, more internationally certified guides, safer and greener experiences, cleaner and better-protected environment, and higher quality of adventure tourism products. As a result, BiH will improve its global positioning and appeal as an outdoor adventure destination.

Adventure tourism activities always include an element of risk. Therefore, it is important for the adventure tourism activity providers to operate as safely as practicable to deliver safe and unforgettable experiences.

The following operational and safety standards guide outlines minimum requirements for adventure tourism activity providers. It can be used by activity providers in BiH, regardless of their size or location, as well as by public sector institutions, should they wish to design bylaws regulating certain activities.

METHODOLOGY

Operational and safety standards for the three adventure tourism products (hiking, cycling and white-water rafting) are based on the same general criteria, with specific guidance and requirements added for each of the three products to make it more product specific.

The standard was inspired by some existing standards which are deemed important in adventure travel sector and follows their guidelines. Standards considered are:

- ISO 21101: Adventure Tourism - Safety management systems
- ISO 21102: Adventure Tourism - Leaders – Personnel competence
- Adventure Travel Guide Standard (ATTA)
- Adventure Travel Covid-19 Health & Safety Guidelines (ATTA)
- GSTC Industry Criteria for Hotels and Tour Operators

Standard was adapted to the local situation, wherever that was possible.

OPERATIONAL AND SAFETY STANDARD FOR HIKING

The Operational and Safety Standard for Hiking is primarily written for commercial hiking operators and activity providers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It sets out the standards and requirements that hiking activity providers in BiH must comply with to reduce risks when providing activities.

This document is not a legal requirement but rather a set of guidelines that will assist operators to meet current good practice. The purpose is not only to assist operators to develop robust safety management systems and embed a strong culture of safety, but also to consider other aspects, such as sustainability and quality, in the process of developing safe and enjoyable adventure experiences.

There are several components to the guidance:

- Legal Compliance
- Safety & Risk Management
- Hiking Guides
- Customer Service
- Sustainability
- Quality
- Covid-19

I LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Every activity provider must identify and understand the legislation, standards, codes of practice, safety guidelines and similar requirements relevant to the operation of their activities and safe management. It must ensure systems are in place to regularly monitor any changes in legislation and remain up to date.

I.1 LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

An activity provider shall be aware of and in compliance with all applicable local, national, and international legislation and regulations.

Activity providers in RS must follow Law on Tourism of RS (45/17). Activity providers in BD must follow Law on Tourism of BD. In FBiH, Law on Tourism is in the process of adoption, but most cantons, except for Posavina, Zenica Doboje Cantons and Canton 10, have their own laws on tourism which must be followed.

1.2 LICENSES

An activity provider shall be fully legally registered and shall have a proper license to perform the activity according to the existing law.

Activity providers in RS must follow Law on Tourism of RS (45/17). Activity providers in BD must follow Law on Tourism of BD. In FBiH, Law on Tourism is in the process of adoption, but most cantons, except for Posavina, Zenica Dobož Cantons and Canton 10, have their own laws on tourism which must be followed.

1.3 PROTECTED AND SENSITIVE AREAS

An activity provider shall comply with zoning requirements and laws related to protected and sensitive areas and to heritage considerations.

Following laws apply, amongst others: Law on Environmental Protection ("OG of the FBiH," Nos. 33/03 and 38/09; OG of RS", No. 28/07; "OG of the BD", Nos, 24/04, 1/05, 19/07 and 9/09), Law on Nature Protection ("OG of the FBiH," No. 66/13; "OG of RS, No. 50/02"; "OG of the BD", 24/04, 1/05, 19/07 and 9/09), Law on Air Protection ("OG of the FBiH," Nos. 33/03 and 4/10; "OG of RS", No. 53/02); "OG of the BD Nos., 25/04, 1/05, 19/07 and 9/09), Law on Water Protection ("OG of the FBiH", No. 33/03; "OG of the RS", No. 50/06; "OG of the BD", 24/04, 1/05, and 19/07), Law on Spatial Planning and Land Utilization ("Official Gazette of the FBiH," Nos. 02/06, 72/07, 32/08, 4/10, 13/10 and 45/10; "OG of the RS, Nos. 40/13, 106/15 and 3/16; " OG of the BD", No. 29/08), Law on Waste Management ("OG of the FBiH," Nos. 33/03 and 72/09; "OG of RS", No. 53/02; OG BD", Nos. 25/04, 1/05, 19/07, 2/08 and 9/09), Law on the Protection of Properties designated as national monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Decision of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments.

2 SAFETY MANAGEMENT

The safety management system (SMS) helps activity providers enhance their safety performance and deliver safe adventure tourism activities. It also helps them ensure participant and staff safety, demonstrate safe practice, and support compliance with applicable legal requirements and international safety standards. SMS needs to look at all the factors that contribute to risk, rather than looking only at what occurs during the activity itself.

Activity providers have unique structures, purposes, sizes, philosophies, leader and guide requirements and operating environments. Because of this, each activity provider's SMS will differ, but the scope shall include at least all the operating locations, all the adventure activities, and all staff and other people who work under operator's control.

To establish, implement, maintain and continually improve an adventure tourism SMS, activity providers shall follow the requirements below (2.1 – 2.8).

2.1 SAFETY POLICY

An activity provider shall develop an adventure tourism safety policy which shall provide the framework for setting adventure tourism safety objectives.

Adventure tourism safety policy shall be established by top management, available as documented information and communicated within the organization. The policy shall include a commitment to satisfy applicable requirements, including legislation and safety standards.

2.2 SAFETY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

An activity provider shall establish adventure tourism safety objectives at relevant levels.

When establishing adventure tourism safety objectives, activity providers shall consider potential benefits; hazards and risks; technical equipment and application; methods of communication; financial, operational, and business requirements; and the views of interested parties. Activity providers shall plan how to achieve its adventure tourism safety objectives by identifying what will be done; what resources will be required; who will be responsible; when it will be completed; how the results will be evaluated.

2.3 DOCUMENTATION

An activity provider shall establish and maintain documented information for describing the main elements of the SMS.

How the provider structures this material is largely driven by the operational needs of the organization. It can be one document that sets out the organizational approach to safety, incl. philosophy, goals and targets, responsibilities and commitment to a strong, positive safety culture, or it can be several documents, such as hazard management, standard operating procedures, emergency preparedness, incident management, document control and continual improvement. It is important that all elements of SMS are aligned to the overarching SMS policy document, have a logical structure, are up to date, comprehensive, clear and accessible.

2.4 COMMITMENT

Leaders and persons doing work under activity provider's control shall be engaged in the development and review of the adventure tourism safety policy and procedures and shall demonstrate their commitment to continual improvement of the performance of the adventure tourism SMS.

The commitment of top leadership and the involvement of staff in the development and continual improvement of SMS are important factors in its effectiveness.

2.5 STAFF

An activity provider shall determine the necessary competences of persons doing work under their control that affects safety performance and ensure that these persons are competent based on appropriate education, training, or experience.

For more on this see *Section 4 Adventure travel guides*.

2.6 COMMUNICATION

An activity provider shall establish a process for communicating and consulting with staff and other persons involved in the provision of adventure tourism activities (internal communication), and a process for communicating and consulting with participants (external communication).

Activity providers shall ensure that staff and other persons involved in the provision of adventure tourism activities are engaged in the development and review of safety management policies and procedures; consulted when there are any changes that affect their safety in delivering adventure tourism activities; represented on safety issues; and informed about who represents them on safety issues and who represents top management. Activity providers shall ensure that safety information is communicated to the participants, and that participants are asked to provide the organization with information that can affect safety management (eg. age, medical condition, alcohol, and drugs ...).

2.7 EMERGENCIES

An activity provider shall identify potential emergency situations and their impacts, and establish, maintain, and implement appropriate response plans and procedures, which shall be periodically tested and reviewed.

Activity providers shall also have a procedure in place to collect from each guest the following minimum information: identification details; emergency contact details (including name and means of contact); special assistance required; health and medical conditions. Participants shall be informed of emergency response plans before the activity begins.

2.8 INCIDENTS

An activity provider shall establish and maintain procedures for defining responsibilities and authority for dealing with, reporting, and investigating incidents; and adopting measures to reduce any consequences deriving from incidents. An activity provider shall have third-party insurance coverage.

Recording and analyzing incidents helps to prevent future incidents, to evaluate the effectiveness of an adventure tourism safety management system, and to control risks.

For Safety Management in Short, go to Annex I. For Emergency Response Plan, go to Annex II.

3 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is an integral part of safety management system. An activity provider shall establish and implement a systematic risk management process for its adventure tourism activities.

Risks are all the various potential events that could cause harm in the activities providers are organizing. Risks and their associated hazards shall be identified and treated prior to undertaking an activity.

3.1 CONTEXT OF EACH ACTIVITY

For each adventure tourism activity, an activity provider shall define the scope (location, duration, activities within activity, interfaces with other activities...), risk management objectives, risk assessment methodology, risk assessment criteria, and define acceptable risk levels.

Establishing the context of the activities can include transport, accommodation, environment, medical or cultural risks.

3.2 RISK ASSESSMENT

An activity provider shall evaluate the likelihood and severity of possible consequences of each risk. The steps include risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation. The outcome of this assessment is a risk rating.

Step 1: Risk identification – An activity provider shall continuously identify risks related to each of its activities. Analysis should not only include activities of all personnel but also competences of participants, sites, facilities, clothing, equipment. When identifying risks, it is valuable to research comparable activities and operations to identify any major incidents that have occurred. The lessons learned from historical events may help to identify similar risks in operations of the provider.

Step 2: Risk analysis – An activity provider shall analyze risk by considering the causes and sources of risk, their positive and negative consequences, and the likelihood those consequences can occur.

Step 3: Risk evaluation – An activity provider shall evaluate the risks against the risk assessment criteria and identify those requiring treatment.

In BiH, assessing following risks also needs to be especially considered in hiking: minefields, insufficiently marked and maintained hiking trails, illegal deforestation and illegal occupation of forest land.

3.3 RISK TREATMENT

An activity provider shall treat risks which are not acceptable. Treatment will reduce the initial risk analysis to an acceptable level.

Risk treatment can include avoiding the risk by deciding not to start or continue with the activity that gives rise to the risk; taking or increasing risk to pursue an opportunity; removing the risk source; retaining the risk by informed decision etc. Risk treatment also happens through providing training for guides, safety briefings to participants, adequate gear and communication throughout the activity etc.

For Risk Management in Short, go to Annex III.

4 HIKING GUIDES

The following criteria apply for guides who are either employed or contracted by the activity provider.

4.1 COMPETENCIES

Prior to guiding, hiking guides shall gain appropriate competencies through training, experience, expertise, and qualifications.

Hiking guides shall undertake local, current and activity-specific certification. Shall this certification not be aligned with international standards, activity providers shall develop in-house, site-specific technical training for their guides. Activity providers shall always cooperate only with appropriately trained and qualified guides.

In BiH, hiking guides are currently trained by Mountaineering Associations of FBiH, RS and Herceg Bosna, using different mountain guiding curricula. It has been recommended to pursue the inclusion of BiH in UIMLA (Union of International Mountain Leaders Association) and initiate unified hiking guide training via this international organization. According to UIMLA, at a minimum, training must include: security in mountainous terrain and river crossing; navigation and orientation; first aid and rescue; group leadership; teaching of technical skills and environmental knowledge; mountain environment; anatomy and physiology; weather; mountain survival and bivouacking; physical ability; legal and economic considerations; multi day activities and expeditions; snow covered terrain.

4.2 SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Hiking guides shall possess specific skills and qualifications in the following 5 areas: technical skills; safety and risk management; customer service and group management; natural and cultural history interpretation; sustainability.

These skills will be gained during UIMLA training and certification.

For those guides who will be only trained by Mountaineering Associations, it is recommended to attend additional adventure guide training soon as it becomes available in BiH, by different service providers. Activity providers shall encourage guides to take part in this training and/or shall prefer guides who have undergone training in the areas mentioned above.

4.2.1 Technical skills

As for technical skills, hiking guides shall: possess adequate and current activity-specific technical skills for the adventure activities they lead; recognize the limitations of their technical skills and the activities that they lead and refrain from guiding outside of their abilities; possess the authority and ability to use and/or operate activity-related equipment and vehicles; possess appropriate First Aid and Wilderness Medicine training and certification; possess orienteering and navigation skills; possess knowledge of and ability to monitor weather and climate condition.

Hiking guides need specific technical skills and experience to operate in the mountains at any time of the year, in all weather conditions and all types of mountain ranges.

4.2.2 Safety and risk management

As for safety and risk management, hiking guides shall: be trained in and follow a safety and risk management system; be aware of best practices to ensure the safety of all participants during adventure activities; be prepared for predictable and unpredictable risk, objective and subjective risk; be knowledgeable about country specific protocols; be informed of, trained in and able to communicate and enforce health and sanitary protocols.

Risk is a central component of all adventure travel. Not only are adventure travel activities often of higher risk due to the settings and skills requirement, but also participants in adventure travel deliberately seek out risk as a part of their experience. This places adventure travel guides in a unique position as they purposefully engage in risky activities.

Activity providers shall implement the safety management system (2) and risk management (3) and their guides shall be fully aware of and trained in all procedures and protocols.

4.2.3 Customer service and group management

As for customer service and group management, hiking guides shall: be skilled verbal and non-verbal communicators; strive to learn the interests, expectations and varying abilities of their participants and personalize their tours to meet those interests, employ management techniques that maximize quality and consistency of

service and experience for all participants; proactively identify issues and conflicts and respond to complaints.

Hiking guides are a part of the tourism service sector and provide services that often go beyond those provided by educators or facilitators of adventure activities. A guide's empathy, patience, flexibility, creativity and resourcefulness will help participants connect with places and people, improving their travel experience and contributing to the positive impacts on all stakeholders.

4.2.4 Natural and cultural history interpretation

As for natural and cultural history interpretation, hiking guides shall: possess knowledge about local natural and cultural history and contemporary society in the destinations where they guide; employ content delivery techniques to share knowledge and respond to participant questions in an engaging manner; provoke, inspire, engage; deliver authentic, balanced and unbiased content; inform participants of relevant local practices and current events prior to contact with individuals and communities.

Hiking guides are expected to be knowledgeable about the natural and cultural history of the destinations where they work. Participants are interested in learning about the people, wildlife and landscapes where they engage in adventure activities and guides must be able to share relevant content with them.

4.2.5 Sustainability

As for sustainability, hiking guides shall follow all the requirements of Section 5 Sustainability.

Sustainability in adventure travel must be fundamental for all activity providers who shall commit to sustainable activities, and guides are on the front lines of enacting sustainable tourism. Guides shall help in the design, implementation and monitoring of sustainability practices throughout a company's operations and activities, as well as monitoring service partners such as hotels, restaurants and other guides. Guides shall also inform participants about the importance of sustainability and sustainable conduct.

5 SUSTAINABILITY

5.1 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

An activity provider shall develop and implement a policy to improve the sustainability of its operations and individual activities. It shall strive for implementation of national or international sustainability standards and certificates.

Sustainability policy shall be suitable to the size and scope of the organization, long-term, and shall address environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, human

rights, health, safety, risk and crisis management issues. It should drive continuous improvement of the activity providers in their sustainability performance.

Activity providers shall strive for implementation of GSTC recognized certificates, such as Travelife for Tour Operators. They shall also include in their value chain certified accommodations and business partners.

For Sustainability Policy template, go to Annex IV.

5.2 IMPACTS ON NATURE

An activity provider shall minimize harmful impacts of its operations on biodiversity, ecosystems, and the natural environment.

This is partially done by complying with laws and regulations (1.3). Additionally, activity providers shall make sure their activities do not cause pollution from unmanaged waste, that the size of their groups does not give impression of over-tourism, and that their activities do not damage ecosystems and infrastructure. Guides shall be adequately trained to understand these principles and communicate them to the participants.

5.3 SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

An activity provider shall eliminate single-use plastics from all the experiences it offers and replace it with environmentally friendly and biodegradable materials.

Water bottles, disposable toiletries, plastic bags, bin liners, food packaging and cups are among the biggest plastic polluters. Activity providers shall eliminate all these articles from their operations and encourage guests to do the same.²

5.4 HUMAN RIGHTS

An activity provider shall respect the human rights of all participants in adventure travel activities and should not tolerate any type of discrimination.

Adventure travel guides meet many communities, families and individuals while carrying out their responsibilities and can set an example to participants and hosts alike by modeling respect for the rights of all humans engaged in adventure experiences.

5.5 ANIMAL WELFARE

An activity provider shall protect animal welfare and report animal abuse. It shall respect local and international accords on illegal wildlife and cultural artifact trade and report violations.

² For more on SUP see Rethinking Single-use plastic products in Travel & Tourism: [UNEP / WTTC: Rethinking Single-Use Plastic Products in Travel & Tourism: Impacts, Managements Practices and Recommendations. June 2021](#)

When hiking, it is most important that an appropriate distance between the animals and participants is maintained, with no contact with, or feeding of free-roaming animals in the wild. Wild animals should not be boxed-in, provoked or chased.

5.6 BEST PRACTICES AND COMMUNICATION

An activity provider shall inform participants on best practices on sustainable travel and encourage them to follow sustainability principles, including waste disposal, respecting wildlife, and minimizing site alterations.

Activity providers shall prepare instructions and adequately train guides for this purpose.

The Leave No Trace Seven Principles³ philosophy can be followed, which says:

- I) Plan ahead and prepare*
- II) Travel and camp on durable surfaces*
- III) Dispose of waste properly*
- IV) Leave what you find*
- V) Minimize campfire impacts*
- VI) Respect wildlife*
- VII) Be considerate of other visitors*

Another useful document to consider is UNWTO's The Responsible Tourist⁴.

5.7 LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT

An activity provider shall design activities which directly involve and support local communities or support local environment and biodiversity.

Activity providers shall support initiatives for local infrastructure and social community development especially in areas where they are particularly active and in areas where environmental awareness among the local population is low. Examples of initiatives include education, training, health and sanitation and projects which address the impacts of climate change. In selecting service providers and products/experiences to feature in programs, activity providers shall favor those that engage with and support local communities.

6 CUSTOMER SERVICE

6.1 SAFETY INFORMATION

An activity provider shall communicate all relevant safety information to the guests and ask them for information that can affect safety management.

³ <https://Int.org/why/7-principles/>

⁴ <https://www.unwto.org/responsible-tourist>

This information is usually provided during an introductory briefing and is reinforced during adventure activities using techniques that acknowledge cultural and linguistic diversity, such as props and other visual materials. Information shall be activity specific.

For example, hiking guides shall at the end of a difficult hike gather the group in a circle so everyone can hear them and inform the group that most accidents happen in the late afternoon when hikers are tired and hungry and less focused on safety.

6.2 DATA PROTECTION

An activity provider shall collect, store, and use personal data according to legal regulations and requirements.

Activity providers must follow Law on Protection of Personal Data of BiH.

6.3 GUEST SATISFACTION

An activity provider shall systematically monitor customer satisfaction and take corrective actions for improvements.

Customer feedback shall be collected on-site (verbally or via surveys) and/or on-line (afterwards, either via e-mail or by searching customer ratings on webpages). A system shall be in place to analyze the results. Negative feedback shall be addressed with corrective actions. Also, organization shall provide feedback from customers to businesses and destinations visited or contracted.

6.4 COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

An activity provider shall have clear procedures in case of complaints from clients.

Complaint procedure shall be publicly available. All complaints shall be recorded and resolved quickly. For this purpose, activity providers shall train their staff to follow the procedure when handling complaints and that they have the power to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

7 QUALITY

7.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

An activity provider shall have a quality assurance policy in place to ensure that an ongoing quality improvement is an integral part of the organization. An activity provider shall strive for implementation of national or international quality standards and certificates.

Activity providers shall establish, continuously review and maintain the quality policy and quality objectives. The quality policy shall build on organization's objectives and

values and be appropriate to the purpose and context of the organization. The policy shall be communicated, understood and applied throughout the organization and towards interested parties.

Activity providers can implement ISO 9001 as an international standard for Quality Management.

For Quality Assurance Policy template, go to Annex V.

8 COVID-19

Following criteria apply during covid-19 pandemic to minimize covid-19 contamination risks.

Hiking can be a low-risk activity for transmission of covid-19 due to several factors: it usually takes place in well-ventilated areas, involves little to no gear, is typically done in small groups, is easy to practice while maintaining social distance, is not technical, and does not require close supervision. However, it is still important that guests are aware of and are committed to observing covid-19 safety protocols and regulations.

8.1 RECOMMENDATIONS AND REGULATIONS

An activity provider shall follow local, regional, and national health authorities' recommendations and regulations on dealing with the covid-19 pandemic and implement all required measures.

Amongst other protocols, USAID Turizam covid-19 protocols are available to activity providers⁵.

8.2 SOCIAL DISTANCING

An activity provider shall reduce the number of people in groups and set social distancing parameters. Masks shall be worn when social distancing is not possible.

Participant numbers shall be as low as reasonably possible. Physical distancing and/or mask wearing should be practiced as much as possible especially if it is a group of strangers and when using transportation, during close-proximity instruction, when helping each other in harder terrain, when trekking on crowded trails where distancing is difficult to maintain.

8.3 CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

An activity provider shall define cleaning and disinfecting procedures for use of approved products according to manufacturers' instructions.

⁵ <https://academy.turizambih.ba/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Smjernice-i-protokoli-za-zdravstvenu-zastitu-od-COVID-19-u-turizmu.pdf>

Activity providers shall put emphasis on disinfection of high touch surfaces and regular cleaning frequency. Activity providers shall encourage participants to avoid sharing equipment and care for and carry their own personal equipment (e.g., pack, water bottle, trekking poles, sleeping bag, mattress). If support staff cares for client gear or shared gear such as group shelters, tents or mattresses during the trip, activity providers shall consider requirements to prevent cross contamination and promote gear sanitation in the field.

8.4 HAND WASHING

An activity provider shall encourage its staff and guests to wash and sanitize hands.

Activity providers shall provide access to hand washing facilities and sanitizer and shall ask that guests sanitize hands when entering any building or office facilities, before starting an activity and as often as needed throughout the activity.

8.5 HEALTH SCREENING

An activity provider shall promote health screening by informing staff and guests to stay at home if they have symptoms or are in a household where someone has symptoms.

Activity providers shall ask guests before joining the activity to self-assess their physical condition and self-screen their risk profile.

8.6 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

An activity provider shall develop prompt emergency responses in cases when staff or guests test positive or have symptoms of covid-19.

Activity providers shall consider following factors when revising their emergency response plan: i) evacuation, especially in remote places; ii) procedures for guests and staff showing symptoms, incl. transportation, care, isolation and testing.

8.7 AMENDMENT OF POLICIES

An activity provider shall review and amend their terms and conditions and refund and cancellation policies.

Activity providers shall allow for cancelations due to self-assessment, onset of symptoms, or last-minute advice against travel by healthcare providers. A new refund and cancellation policy shall be in place during the pandemic.

NOTE: If an activity provider already has an established and functional safety management system, all the measures proposed in Section 8 can be integrated in their existing system.

OPERATIONAL AND SAFETY STANDARD FOR CYCLING

The Operational and Safety Standard for Cycling is primarily written for commercial cycling operators and activity providers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It sets out the standards and requirements that cycling activity providers in BiH must comply with to reduce risks when providing activities.

This document is not a legal requirement but rather a set of guidelines that will assist operators to meet current good practice. The purpose is not only to assist operators to develop robust safety management systems and embed a strong culture of safety, but also to consider other aspects, such as sustainability and quality, in the process of developing safe and enjoyable adventure experiences.

There are several components to the guidance:

- Legal Compliance
- Safety & Risk Management
- Cycling Guides
- Customer Service
- Sustainability
- Quality
- Covid-19

I LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Every activity provider must identify and understand the legislation, standards, codes of practice, safety guidelines and similar requirements relevant to the operation of their activities and safe management. It must ensure systems are in place to regularly monitor any changes in legislation and remain up to date.

I.1 LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

An activity provider shall be aware of and in compliance with all applicable local, national, and international legislation and regulations.

Activity providers in RS must follow Law on Tourism of RS (45/17). Activity providers in BD must follow Law on Tourism of BD. In FBiH, Law on Tourism is in the process of adoption, but most cantons, except for Posavina, Zenica Doboje Cantons and Canton 10, have their own laws on tourism which must be followed.

I.2 LICENSES

An activity provider shall be fully legally registered and shall have a proper license to perform the activity according to the existing law.

Activity providers in RS must follow Law on Tourism of RS (45/17). Activity providers in BD must follow Law on Tourism of BD. In FBiH, Law on Tourism is in the process of adoption, but most cantons, except for Posavina, Zenica Doboje Cantons and Canton 10, have their own laws on tourism which must be followed.

1.3 PROTECTED AND SENSITIVE AREAS

An activity provider shall comply with zoning requirements and laws related to protected and sensitive areas and to heritage considerations.

Following laws apply, amongst others: Law on Environmental Protection (“OG of the FBiH,” Nos. 33/03 and 38/09; OG of RS”, No. 28/07; “OG of the BD”, Nos, 24/04, 1/05, 19/07 and 9/09), Law on Nature Protection (“OG of the FBiH,” No. 66/13; “OG of RS, No. 50/02”; “OG of the BD”, 24/04, 1/05, 19/07 and 9/09), Law on Air Protection (“OG of the FBiH,” Nos. 33/03 and 4/10; “OG of RS”, No. 53/02): “OG of the BD Nos., 25/04, 1/05, 19/07 and 9/09), Law on Water Protection (“OG of the FBiH”, No. 33/03; “OG of the RS”, No. 50/06; “OG of the BD”, 24/04, 1/05, and 19/07), Law on Spatial Planning and Land Utilization (“Official Gazette of the FBiH,” Nos. 02/06, 72/07, 32/08, 4/10, 13/10 and 45/10; “OG of the RS, Nos. 40/13, 106/15 and 3/16; “ OG of the BD”, No. 29/08), Law on Waste Management (“OG of the FBiH," Nos. 33/03 and 72/09; "OG of RS", No. 53/02; OG BD", Nos. 25/04, 1/05, 19/07, 2/08 and 9/09), Law on the Protection of Properties designated as national monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Decision of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments.

2 SAFETY MANAGEMENT

The safety management system (SMS) helps activity providers enhance their safety performance and deliver safe adventure tourism activities. It also helps them ensure participant and staff safety, demonstrate safe practice, and support compliance with applicable legal requirements and international safety standards. SMS needs to look at all the factors that contribute to risk, rather than looking only at what occurs during the activity itself.

Activity providers have unique structures, purposes, sizes, philosophies, leader and guide requirements and operating environments. Because of this, each activity provider’s SMS will differ, but the scope shall include at least all the operating locations, all the adventure activities, and all staff and other people who work under operator’s control.

To establish, implement, maintain and continually improve an adventure tourism SMS, activity providers shall follow the requirements below (2.1 – 2.8).

2.1 SAFETY POLICY

An activity provider shall develop an adventure tourism safety policy which shall provide the framework for setting adventure tourism safety objectives.

Adventure tourism safety policy shall be established by top management, available as documented information and communicated within the organization. The policy shall include a commitment to satisfy applicable requirements, including legislation and safety standards.

2.2 SAFETY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

An activity provider shall establish adventure tourism safety objectives at relevant levels.

When establishing adventure tourism safety objectives, activity providers shall consider potential benefits; hazards and risks; technical equipment and application; methods of communication; financial, operational, and business requirements; and the views of interested parties. Activity providers shall plan how to achieve their adventure tourism safety objectives by identifying what will be done; what resources will be required; who will be responsible; when it will be completed; how the results will be evaluated.

2.3 DOCUMENTATION

An activity provider shall establish and maintain documented information for describing the main elements of the SMS.

How the provider structures this material is largely driven by the operational needs of the organization. It can be one document that sets out the organizational approach to safety, incl. philosophy, goals and targets, responsibilities and commitment to a strong, positive safety culture, or it can be several documents, such as hazard management, standard operating procedures, emergency preparedness, incident management, document control and continual improvement. It is important that all elements of SMS are aligned to the overarching SMS policy document, have a logical structure, are up to date, comprehensive, clear and accessible.

2.4 COMMITMENT

Leaders and persons doing work under activity provider's control shall be engaged in the development and review of the adventure tourism safety policy and procedures and shall demonstrate their commitment to continual improvement of the performance of the adventure tourism SMS.

The commitment of top leadership and the involvement of staff in the development and continual improvement of SMS are important factors in its effectiveness.

2.5 STAFF

An activity provider shall determine the necessary competences of persons doing work under their control that affects safety performance and ensure that these persons are competent based on appropriate education, training, or experience.

For more on this see *Section 4 Adventure travel guides*.

2.6 COMMUNICATION

An activity provider shall establish a process for communicating and consulting with staff and other persons involved in the provision of adventure tourism activities (internal communication), and a process for communicating and consulting with participants (external communication).

Activity providers shall ensure that staff and other persons involved in the provision of adventure tourism activities are engaged in the development and review of safety management policies and procedures; consulted when there are any changes that affect their safety in delivering adventure tourism activities; represented on safety issues; and informed about who represents them on safety issues and who represents top management. Activity providers shall ensure that safety information is communicated to the participants, and that participants are asked to provide the organization with information that can affect safety management (eg. age, medical condition, alcohol, and drugs ...).

2.7 EMERGENCIES

An activity provider shall identify potential emergency situations and their impacts, and establish, maintain, and implement appropriate response plans and procedures, which shall be periodically tested and reviewed.

Activity providers shall also have a procedure in place to collect from each guest the following minimum information: identification details; emergency contact details (including name and means of contact); special assistance required; health and medical conditions. Participants shall be informed of emergency response plans before the activity begins.

2.8 INCIDENTS

An activity provider shall establish and maintain procedures for defining responsibilities and authority for dealing with, reporting, and investigating incidents; and adopting measures to reduce any consequences deriving from incidents. An activity provider shall have a third-party insurance coverage.

Recording and analyzing incidents helps to prevent future incidents, to evaluate the effectiveness of an adventure tourism safety management system, and to control risks.

For Safety Management in Short, go to Annex I. For Emergency Response Plan, go to Annex II.

3 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is an integral part of safety management system. An activity provider shall establish and implement a systematic risk management process for its adventure tourism activities.

Risks are all the various potential events that could cause harm in the activities providers are organizing. Risks and their associated hazards shall be identified and treated prior to undertaking an activity.

3.1 CONTEXT OF EACH ACTIVITY

For each adventure tourism activity, an activity provider shall define the scope (location, duration, activities within activity, interfaces with other activities...), risk management objectives, risk assessment methodology, risk assessment criteria, and define acceptable risk levels.

Establishing the context of the activities can include transport, accommodation, environment, medical or cultural risks.

3.2 RISK ASSESSMENT

An activity provider shall evaluate the likelihood and severity of possible consequences of each risk. The steps include risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation. The outcome of this assessment is a risk rating.

Step 1: Risk identification – An activity provider shall continuously identify risks related to each of its activities. Analysis should not only include activities of all personnel but also competences of participants, sites, facilities, clothing, equipment. When identifying risks, it is valuable to research comparable activities and operations to identify any major incidents that have occurred. The lessons learned from historical events may help to identify similar risks in operations of the provider.

Step 2: Risk analysis – An activity provider shall analyze risk by considering the causes and sources of risk, their positive and negative consequences, and the likelihood those consequences can occur.

Step 3: Risk evaluation – An activity provider shall evaluate the risks against the risk assessment criteria and identify those requiring treatment.

In BiH, assessing following risks also needs to be especially considered in cycling: minefields, insufficiently marked and maintained cycling trails, illegal cycling trails, road traffic, poorly maintained roads, drivers' awareness of presence of cyclists on the roads, illegal deforestation and illegal occupation of forest land.

3.3 RISK TREATMENT

An activity provider shall treat risks which are not acceptable. Treatment will reduce the initial risk analysis to an acceptable level.

Risk treatment can include avoiding the risk by deciding not to start or continue with the activity that gives rise to the risk; taking or increasing risk to pursue an opportunity; removing the risk source; retaining the risk by informed decision etc. Risk treatment also happens through providing training for guides, safety briefings to participants, adequate gear and communication throughout the activity etc.

For Risk Management in Short, go to Annex III.

4 CYCLING GUIDES

The following criteria apply for guides who are either employed or contracted by the activity provider.

4.1 COMPETENCIES

Prior to guiding, cycling guides shall gain appropriate competencies through training, experience, expertise, and qualifications.

Cycling guides shall undertake local, current and activity-specific certification. Shall this certification not be aligned with international standards, activity providers shall develop in-house, site-specific technical training for their guides.

In BiH, cycling guides were trained and licensed in the frame of different projects, such as the Vrbas Adventure Resort (2009), USAID & ATTA Outdoor Guide Training, and the Cycling Rural project (EU cross-border cooperation BiH - Montenegro). Activity providers shall prefer cooperation with these certified guides, until the new industry accepted and BiH specific guide training is in place.

4.2 SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Cycling guides shall possess specific skills and qualifications in the following 5 areas: technical skills; safety and risk management; customer service and group management; natural and cultural history interpretation; sustainability.

Activity providers shall assess knowledge of their guides in the areas stated above. Shall it not be sufficient, it is recommended that guides attend additional adventure guide training as they become available in BiH, provided by other licensed specific training providers.

Activity providers shall encourage guides to take part in this training and/or shall prefer guides who have been trained in the relevant areas mentioned above.

4.2.1 Technical skills

As for technical skills, cycling guides shall: possess adequate and current activity-specific technical skills for the adventure activities they lead; recognize the limitations of their technical skills and the activities that they lead and refrain from guiding outside of their abilities; possess the authority and ability to use and/or operate activity-related equipment and vehicles; possess appropriate First Aid and Wilderness Medicine training and certification; possess orienteering and navigation skills; possess knowledge of and ability to monitor weather and climate condition.

On a bicycle touring trip, guides shall be physically able to cover a given daily distance and at the same time attend to other aspects of guiding such as weather conditions, technical challenges, equipment use and repair and participants' needs and expectations.

4.2.2 Safety and risk management

As for safety and risk management, cycling guides shall: be trained in and follow a safety and risk management system; be aware of best practices to ensure the safety of all participants during adventure activities; be prepared for predictable and unpredictable risk, objective and subjective risk; be knowledgeable about country specific protocols; be informed of, trained in and able to communicate and enforce health and sanitary protocols.

Risk is a central component of all adventure travel. Not only are adventure travel activities often of higher risk due to the settings and skills requirement, but also participants in adventure travel deliberately seek out risk as a part of their experience. This places adventure travel guides in a unique position as they purposefully engage in risky activities.

Activity providers shall implement the safety management system (2) and risk management (3) and their guides shall be fully aware of and trained in all procedures and protocols. To maximize safety, cycling guides should adhere to a protocol for bicycle maintenance.

4.2.3 Customer service and group management

As for customer service and group management, cycling guides shall: be skilled verbal and non-verbal communicators; strive to learn the interests, expectations and varying abilities of their participants and personalize their tours to meet those interests, employ management techniques that maximize quality and consistency of service and experience for all participants; proactively identify issues and conflicts and respond to complaints.

Cycling guides are a part of the tourism service sector and provide services that often go beyond those provided by educators or facilitators of adventure activities. A guide's empathy, patience, flexibility, creativity and resourcefulness will help

participants connect with places and people, improving their travel experience and contributing to the positive impacts on all stakeholders.

4.2.4 Natural and cultural history interpretation

As for natural and cultural history interpretation, cycling guides shall: possess knowledge about local natural and cultural history and contemporary society in the destinations where they guide; employ content delivery techniques to share knowledge and respond to participant questions in an engaging manner; provoke, inspire, engage; deliver authentic, balanced and unbiased content; inform participants of relevant local practices and current events prior to contact with individuals and communities.

Cycling guides are expected to be knowledgeable about the natural and cultural history of the destinations where they work. Participants are interested in learning about the people, wildlife and landscapes where they engage in adventure activities and guides must be able to share relevant content with them.

4.2.5 Sustainability

As for sustainability, cycling guides shall follow all the requirements of Section 5 Sustainability.

Sustainability in adventure travel must be fundamental for all activity providers who shall commit to sustainable activities, and guides are on the front lines of enacting sustainable tourism. Guides shall help in the design, implementation and monitoring of sustainability practices throughout a company's operations and activities, as well as monitoring service partners such as hotels, restaurants and other guides. Guides shall also inform participants about the importance of sustainability and sustainable conduct.

5 SUSTAINABILITY

5.1 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

An activity provider shall develop and implement a policy to improve the sustainability of its operations and individual activities. It shall strive for implementation of national or international sustainability standards and certificates.

Sustainability policy shall be suitable to the size and scope of the organization, long-term, and shall address environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health, safety, risk and crisis management issues. It should drive continuous improvement of the activity providers in their sustainability performance.

Activity providers shall strive for implementation of GSTC recognized certificates, such as Travelife for Tour Operators. They shall also include in their value chain certified accommodations and business partners.

For Sustainability Policy template, go to Annex IV.

5.2 IMPACTS ON NATURE

An activity provider shall minimize harmful impacts of its operations on biodiversity, ecosystems, and the natural environment.

This is partially done by complying with laws and regulations (1.3). Additionally, activity providers shall make sure their activities do not cause pollution from unmanaged waste, that the size of their groups does not give impression of over-tourism, and that their activities do not damage ecosystems and infrastructure. Guides shall be adequately trained to understand these principles and communicate them to the participants.

5.3 SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

An activity provider shall eliminate single-use plastics from all the experiences it offers and replace it with environmentally friendly and biodegradable materials.

Water bottles, disposable toiletries, plastic bags, bin liners, food packaging and cups are among the biggest plastic polluters. Activity providers shall eliminate all these articles from their operations and encourage guests to do the same.⁶

5.4 HUMAN RIGHTS

An activity provider shall respect the human rights of all participants in adventure travel activities and should not tolerate any type of discrimination.

Adventure travel guides meet many communities, families and individuals while carrying out their responsibilities and can set an example to participants and hosts alike by modeling respect for the rights of all humans engaged in adventure experiences.

5.5 ANIMAL WELFARE

An activity provider shall protect animal welfare and report animal abuse. It shall respect local and international accords on illegal wildlife and cultural artifact trade and report violations.

When cycling in nature, it is important that an appropriate distance between the animals and participants is maintained, with no contact with, or feeding of free-roaming animals in the wild. Wild animals should not be boxed-in, provoked or chased.

⁶ For more on SUP see Rethinking Single-use plastic products in Travel & Tourism: [UNEP / WTTC: Rethinking Single-Use Plastic Products in Travel & Tourism: Impacts, Managements Practices and Recommendations. June 2021](#)

5.6 BEST PRACTICES AND COMMUNICATION

An activity provider shall inform participants on best practices on sustainable travel and encourage them to follow sustainability principles, including waste disposal, respecting wildlife, and minimizing site alterations.

Activity providers shall prepare instructions and adequately train guides for this purpose.

The Leave No Trace Seven Principles⁷ philosophy can be followed, which says:

- I) Plan ahead and prepare*
- II) Travel and camp on durable surfaces*
- III) Dispose of waste properly*
- IV) Leave what you find*
- V) Minimize campfire impacts*
- VI) Respect wildlife*
- VII) Be considerate of other visitors*

In addition to the Leave no Trace Principles, cycling guides shall also take into consideration IMBA's Ride Vibes⁸, a tool that promotes respect, inclusivity, safety and enjoyment on the trails. Guides shall share these principles with their guests.

Another useful document to consider is UNWTO's The Responsible Tourist⁹.

5.7 LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT

An activity provider shall design activities which directly involve and support local communities or support local environment and biodiversity.

Activity providers shall support initiatives for local infrastructure and social community development especially in areas where they are particularly active and in areas where environmental awareness among the local population is low. Examples of initiatives include education, training, health and sanitation and projects which address the impacts of climate change. In selecting service providers and products/experiences to feature in programs, activity providers shall also favor those that engage with and support local communities.

6 CUSTOMER SERVICE

6.1 SAFETY INFORMATION

An activity provider shall communicate all relevant safety information to the guests and ask them for information that can affect safety management.

⁷ <https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>

⁸ <https://www.imba.com/ride/ride-vibes>

⁹ <https://www.unwto.org/responsible-tourist>

This information is usually provided during an introductory briefing and is reinforced during adventure activities using techniques that acknowledge cultural and linguistic diversity, such as props and other visual materials. Information shall be activity specific.

For example, mountain biking guides shall gather the group in a circle so everyone can hear them and inform the group that most serious mountain biking injuries occur during downhill riding which consequentially requires more attention.

6.2 DATA PROTECTION

An activity provider shall collect, store, and use personal data according to legal regulations and requirements.

Activity providers must follow Law on Protection of Personal Data of BiH.

6.3 GUEST SATISFACTION

An activity provider shall systematically monitor customer satisfaction and take corrective actions for improvements.

Customer feedback shall be collected on-site (verbally or via surveys) and/or on-line (afterwards, either via e-mail or by searching customer ratings on webpages). A system shall be in place to analyze the results. Negative feedback shall be addressed with corrective actions. Also, organization shall provide feedback from customers to businesses and destinations visited or contracted.

6.4 COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

An activity provider shall have clear procedures in case of complaints from clients.

Complaint procedure shall be publicly available. All complaints shall be recorded and resolved quickly. For this purpose, activity providers shall train their staff to follow the procedure when handling complaints and that they have the power to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

7 QUALITY

7.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

An activity provider shall have a quality assurance policy in place to ensure that an ongoing quality improvement is an integral part of the organization. An activity provider shall strive for implementation of national or international quality standards and certificates.

Activity providers shall establish, continuously review and maintain the quality policy and quality objectives. The quality policy shall build on organization's objectives and

values and be appropriate to the purpose and context of the organization. The policy shall be communicated, understood and applied throughout the organization and towards interested parties.

Activity providers can implement ISO 9001 as an international standard for Quality Management.

For Quality Assurance Policy template, go to Annex V.

8 COVID-19

Following criteria apply during covid-19 pandemic to minimize covid-19 contamination risks.

Cycling has been considered a healthy option for exercising since it is done individually in well-ventilated spaces and gear sharing is easily avoided or managed. On the other hand, airborne “droplet clouds” may have extended zones and distances when riding that require attention to manage.

8.1 RECOMMENDATIONS AND REGULATIONS

An activity provider shall follow local, regional, and national health authorities’ recommendations and regulations on dealing with the covid-19 pandemic and implement all required measures.

Amongst other protocols, USAID Turizam covid-19 protocols are available to activity providers¹⁰.

8.2 SOCIAL DISTANCING

An activity provider shall reduce the number of people in groups and set social distancing parameters. Masks shall be worn when social distancing is not possible.

For cycling, there are two different protocols for social distancing. One is the protocol for the group activities while actively engaged in cycling (riding), and one for preparation and other related activities (non-riding).

When riding, groups should be organized to promote physical distancing. Activity providers shall consider riding staggered, not immediately following another rider, or not immediately next to another rider. When not riding, masks shall be used in situations of higher risk of transmission, such as transportation, close proximity instruction or assistance, or during riding breaks.

Participant numbers shall be as low as reasonably possible.

¹⁰ <https://academy.turizambih.ba/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Smjernice-i-protokoli-za-zdravstvenu-zastitu-od-COVID-19-u-turizmu.pdf>

8.3 CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

An activity provider shall define cleaning and disinfecting procedures for use of approved products according to manufacturers' instructions.

Activity providers shall put emphasis on disinfection of high touch surfaces and regular cleaning frequency. Activity providers shall encourage participants to avoid sharing equipment and have their own personal equipment, such as bicycle, helmet, gloves, hydration system.

8.4 HAND WASHING

An activity provider shall encourage its staff and guests to wash and sanitize hands.

Activity providers shall provide access to hand washing facilities and sanitizer and shall ask that guests sanitize hands when entering any building or office facilities, before starting an activity and as often as needed throughout the activity.

8.5 HEALTH SCREENING

An activity provider shall promote health screening by informing staff and guests to stay at home if they have symptoms or are in a household where someone has symptoms.

Activity providers shall ask guests before joining the activity to self-assess their physical condition and self-screen their risk profile.

8.6 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

An activity provider shall develop prompt emergency responses in cases when staff or guests test positive or have symptoms of covid-19.

Activity providers shall consider following factors when revising their emergency response plan: i) evacuation, especially in remote places; ii) procedures for guests and staff showing symptoms, incl. transportation, care, isolation and testing.

8.7 AMENDMENT OF POLICIES

An activity provider shall review and amend their terms and conditions and refund and cancellation policies.

Activity providers shall allow for cancellations due to self-assessment, onset of symptoms, or last-minute advice against travel by healthcare providers. A new refund and cancellation policy shall be in place during the pandemic.

NOTE: If an activity provider already has an established and functional safety management system, all the measures proposed in Section 8 can be integrated in their existing system.

OPERATIONAL AND SAFETY STANDARD FOR RAFTING

The Operational and Safety Standard for Rafting is primarily written for commercial rafting operators and activity providers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It sets out the standards and requirements that rafting activity providers in BiH must comply with to reduce risks when providing activities.

This document is not a legal requirement but rather a set of guidelines that will assist operators to meet current good practice. The purpose is not only to assist operators to develop robust safety management systems and embed a strong culture of safety, but also to consider other aspects, such as sustainability and quality, in the process of developing safe and enjoyable adventure experiences.

There are several components to the guidance:

- Legal Compliance
- Safety & Risk Management
- Rafting Guides
- Customer Service
- Sustainability
- Quality
- Covid-19

I LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Every activity provider must identify and understand the legislation, standards, codes of practice, safety guidelines and similar requirements relevant to the operation of their activities and safe management. It must ensure systems are in place to regularly monitor any changes in legislation and remain up to date.

I.1 LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

An activity provider shall be aware of and in compliance with all applicable local, national, and international legislation and regulations.

Activity providers in RS must follow Law on Tourism of RS (45/17). Activity providers in BD must follow Law on Tourism of BD. In FBiH, Law on Tourism is in the process of adoption, but most cantons, except for Posavina, Zenica Doboje Cantons and Canton 10, have their own laws on tourism which must be followed.

Activity providers in RS shall also be aware of the Bylaw on the Requirements and Ways to Provide Rafting Services as a Tourism Activity (Official Gazette of RS,

10/11) and Bylaw on Minimum Requirements for Providing Tourism Service in Swimming Areas (Official Gazette of RS, 89/12).

Activity providers in FBiH shall be aware of entity, cantonal and local relevant laws and bylaws.

1.2 LICENSES

An activity provider shall be fully legally registered and shall have a proper license to perform the activity according to the existing law.

Activity providers in RS must follow Law on Tourism of RS (45/17). Activity providers in BD must follow Law on Tourism of BD. In FBiH, Law on Tourism is in the process of adoption, but many cantons have their own laws on tourism which must be followed.

1.3 PROTECTED AND SENSITIVE AREAS

An activity provider shall comply with zoning requirements and laws related to protected and sensitive areas and to heritage considerations.

Following laws apply, amongst others: Law on Environmental Protection (“OG of the FBiH,” Nos. 33/03 and 38/09; OG of RS”, No. 28/07; “OG of the BD”, Nos, 24/04, 1/05, 19/07 and 9/09), Law on Nature Protection (“OG of the FBiH,” No. 66/13; “OG of RS, No. 50/02”; “OG of the BD”, 24/04, 1/05, 19/07 and 9/09), Law on Air Protection (“OG of the FBiH,” Nos. 33/03 and 4/10; “OG of RS”, No. 53/02); “OG of the BD Nos., 25/04, 1/05, 19/07 and 9/09), Law on Water Protection (“OG of the FBiH”, No. 33/03; “OG of the RS”, No. 50/06; “OG of the BD”, 24/04, 1/05, and 19/07), Law on Spatial Planning and Land Utilization (“Official Gazette of the FBiH,” Nos. 02/06, 72/07, 32/08, 4/10, 13/10 and 45/10; “OG of the RS, Nos. 40/13, 106/15 and 3/16; “ OG of the BD”, No. 29/08), Law on Waste Management (“OG of the FBiH," Nos. 33/03 and 72/09; "OG of RS", No. 53/02; OG BD", Nos. 25/04, 1/05, 19/07, 2/08 and 9/09), Law on the Protection of Properties designated as national monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Decision of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments.

2 SAFETY MANAGEMENT

The safety management system (SMS) helps activity providers enhance their safety performance and deliver safe adventure tourism activities. It also helps them ensure participant and staff safety, demonstrate safe practice, and support compliance with applicable legal requirements and international safety standards. SMS needs to look at all the factors that contribute to risk, rather than looking only at what occurs during the activity itself.

Activity providers have unique structures, purposes, sizes, philosophies, leader and guide requirements and operating environments. Because of this, each activity provider's SMS will differ, but the scope shall include at least all the operating locations, all the adventure activities, and all staff and other people who work under operator's control.

To establish, implement, maintain and continually improve an adventure tourism SMS, activity providers shall follow the requirements below (2.1 – 2.8).

2.1 SAFETY POLICY

An activity provider shall develop an adventure tourism safety policy which shall provide the framework for setting adventure tourism safety objectives.

Adventure tourism safety policy shall be established by top management, available as documented information and communicated within the organization. The policy shall include a commitment to satisfy applicable requirements, including legislation and safety standards.

2.2 SAFETY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

An activity provider shall establish adventure tourism safety objectives at relevant levels.

When establishing adventure tourism safety objectives, activity providers shall consider potential benefits; hazards and risks; technical equipment and application; methods of communication; financial, operational, and business requirements; and the views of interested parties. Activity providers shall plan how to achieve their adventure tourism safety objectives by identifying what will be done; what resources will be required; who will be responsible; when it will be completed; how the results will be evaluated.

2.3 DOCUMENTATION

An activity provider shall establish and maintain documented information for describing the main elements of the SMS.

How the provider structures this material is largely driven by the operational needs of the organization. It can be one document that sets out the organizational approach to safety, incl. philosophy, goals and targets, responsibilities and commitment to a strong, positive safety culture, or it can be several documents, such as hazard management, standard operating procedures, emergency preparedness, incident management, document control and continual improvement. It is important that all elements of SMS are aligned to the overarching SMS policy document, have a logical structure, are up to date, comprehensive, clear and accessible.

2.4 COMMITMENT

Leaders and persons doing work under activity provider's control shall be engaged in the development and review of the adventure tourism safety policy and procedures and shall demonstrate their commitment to continual improvement of the performance of the adventure tourism SMS.

The commitment of top leadership and the involvement of staff in the development and continual improvement of SMS are important factors in its effectiveness.

2.5 STAFF

An activity provider shall determine the necessary competences of persons doing work under their control that affects safety performance and ensure that these persons are competent based on appropriate education, training, or experience.

For more on this see *Section 4 Adventure travel guides*.

2.6 COMMUNICATION

An activity provider shall establish a process for communicating and consulting with staff and other persons involved in the provision of adventure tourism activities (internal communication), and a process for communicating and consulting with participants (external communication).

Activity providers shall ensure that staff and other persons involved in the provision of adventure tourism activities are engaged in the development and review of safety management policies and procedures; consulted when there are any changes that affect their safety in delivering adventure tourism activities; represented on safety issues; and informed about who represents them on safety issues and who represents top management. Activity providers shall ensure that safety information is communicated to the participants, and that participants are asked to provide the organization with information that can affect safety management (eg. age, medical condition, alcohol, and drugs ...).

2.7 EMERGENCIES

An activity provider shall identify potential emergency situations and their impacts, and establish, maintain, and implement appropriate response plans and procedures, which shall be periodically tested and reviewed.

Activity providers shall also have a procedure in place to collect from each guest the following minimum information: identification details; emergency contact details (including name and means of contact); special assistance required; health and medical conditions. Participants shall be informed of emergency response plans before the activity begins.

2.8 INCIDENTS

An activity provider shall establish and maintain procedures for defining responsibilities and authority for dealing with, reporting, and investigating incidents; and adopting measures to reduce any consequences deriving from incidents. An activity provider shall have a third-party insurance coverage.

Recording and analyzing incidents helps to prevent future incidents, to evaluate the effectiveness of an adventure tourism safety management system, and to control risks.

For Safety Management in Short, go to Annex I. For Emergency Response Plan, go to Annex II.

3 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is an integral part of safety management system. An activity provider shall establish and implement a systematic risk management process for its adventure tourism activities.

Risks are all the various potential events that could cause harm in the activities providers are organizing. Risks and their associated hazards shall be identified and treated prior to undertaking an activity.

3.1 CONTEXT OF EACH ACTIVITY

For each adventure tourism activity, an activity provider shall define the scope (location, duration, activities within activity, interfaces with other activities...), risk management objectives, risk assessment methodology, risk assessment criteria, and define acceptable risk levels.

Establishing the context of the activities can include transport, accommodation, environment, medical or cultural risks.

3.2 RISK ASSESSMENT

An activity provider shall evaluate the likelihood and severity of possible consequences of each risk. The steps include risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation. The outcome of this assessment is a risk rating.

Step 1: Risk identification – An activity provider shall continuously identify risks related to each of its activities. Analysis should not only include activities of all personnel but also competences of participants, sites, facilities, clothing, equipment. When identifying risks, it is valuable to research comparable activities and operations to identify any major incidents that have occurred. The lessons learned from historical events may help to identify similar risks in operations of the provider.

Step 2: Risk analysis – An activity provider shall analyze risk by considering the causes and sources of risk, their positive and negative consequences, and the likelihood those consequences can occur.

Step 3: Risk evaluation – An activity provider shall evaluate the risks against the risk assessment criteria and identify those requiring treatment.

In BiH, assessing following risks also needs to be especially considered in rafting: illegal competitors, unlicensed guides, participants with no or little previous experience, climate change and water shortages, uncontrolled construction of hydroelectric power plants and dams, river pollution, over-rafting.

3.3 RISK TREATMENT

An activity provider shall treat risks which are not acceptable. Treatment will reduce the initial risk analysis to an acceptable level.

Risk treatment can include avoiding the risk by deciding not to start or continue with the activity that gives rise to the risk; taking or increasing risk to pursue an opportunity; removing the risk source; retaining the risk by informed decision etc. Risk treatment also happens through providing training for guides, safety briefings to participants, adequate gear and communication throughout the activity etc.

For Risk Management in Short, go to Annex III.

4 RAFTING GUIDES

The following criteria apply for guides who are either employed or contracted by the activity provider.

4.1 COMPETENCIES

Prior to guiding, rafting guides shall gain appropriate competencies through training, experience, expertise, and qualifications.

Rafting guides shall undertake local, current and activity-specific certification. Shall this certification not be aligned with international standards, activity providers shall develop in-house, site-specific technical training for their guides. Activity providers shall prefer cooperation with certified guides.

In BiH, IRF's guide certification has been, at least partially, adopted as an industry standard. Rafting guides shall undergo IRF Guide Training Program to achieve at least Raft Guide Level 2 award, which certifies them to operate as a rafting guide on rapids up to Class 2.

4.2 SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Rafting guides shall possess specific skills and qualifications in the following 5 areas: technical skills; safety and risk management; customer service and group management; natural and cultural history interpretation; sustainability.

As part of IRF's Guide Training Program, guides acquire knowledge in following areas: role of raft guides, equipment, safety, hydrology, strokes, commands and maneuvers, trip and emergency planning, swimming, rescues, flipping, customer communication.

Activity providers shall assess knowledge of their guides in the areas stated above. Shall it not be sufficient, it is recommended that guides attend additional adventure guide training which shall soon be available in BiH.

Activity providers shall encourage guides to take part in this training and/or shall prefer guides who have been trained in the relevant areas mentioned above.

4.2.1 Technical skills

As for technical skills, rafting guides shall: possess adequate and current activity-specific technical skills for the adventure activities they lead; recognize the limitations of their technical skills and the activities that they lead and refrain from guiding outside of their abilities; possess the authority and ability to use and/or operate activity-related equipment and vehicles; possess appropriate First Aid and Wilderness Medicine training and certification; possess orienteering and navigation skills; possess knowledge of and ability to monitor weather and climate condition.

Rafting guides must be able to swim and shall be skilled in rafting techniques, types and usage of equipment, and signaling.

4.2.2 Safety and risk management

As for safety and risk management, rafting guides shall: be trained in and follow a safety and risk management system; be aware of best practices to ensure the safety of all participants during adventure activities; be prepared for predictable and unpredictable risk, objective and subjective risk; be knowledgeable about country specific protocols; be informed of, trained in and able to communicate and enforce health and sanitary protocols.

Risk is a central component of all adventure travel. Not only are adventure travel activities often of higher risk due to the settings and skills requirement, but also participants in adventure travel deliberately seek out risk as a part of their experience. This places adventure travel guides in a unique position as they purposefully engage in risky activities.

Activity providers shall implement the safety management system (2) and risk management (3) and their guides shall be fully aware of and trained in all procedures and protocols.

4.2.3 Customer service and group management

As for customer service and group management, rafting guides shall: be skilled verbal and non-verbal communicators; strive to learn the interests, expectations and varying abilities of their participants and personalize their tours to meet those interests, employ management techniques that maximize quality and consistency of service and experience for all participants; proactively identify issues and conflicts and respond to complaints.

Rafting guides are a part of the tourism service sector and provide services that often go beyond those provided by educators or facilitators of adventure activities. A guide's empathy, patience, flexibility, creativity and resourcefulness will help participants connect with places and people, improving their travel experience and contributing to the positive impacts on all stakeholders.

4.2.4 Natural and cultural history interpretation

As for natural and cultural history interpretation, rafting guides shall: possess knowledge about local natural and cultural history and contemporary society in the destinations where they guide; employ content delivery techniques to share knowledge and respond to participant questions in an engaging manner; provoke, inspire, engage; deliver authentic, balanced and unbiased content; inform participants of relevant local practices and current events prior to contact with individuals and communities.

Rafting guides are expected to be knowledgeable about the natural and cultural history of the destinations where they work. Participants are interested in learning about the people, wildlife and landscapes where they engage in adventure activities and guides must be able to share relevant content with them.

4.2.5 Sustainability

As for sustainability, rafting guides shall follow all the requirements of Section 5 Sustainability.

Sustainability in adventure travel must be fundamental for all activity providers who shall commit to sustainable activities, and guides are on the front lines of enacting sustainable tourism. Guides shall help in the design, implementation and monitoring of sustainability practices throughout a company's operations and activities, as well as monitoring service partners such as hotels, restaurants and other guides. Guides shall also inform participants about the importance of sustainability and sustainable conduct.

5 SUSTAINABILITY

Rafting has a great advantage over many other sports and activities in that the activity itself - floating down waterways - has very little impact on the environment. Where rafting needs to focus is how the activity impacts the region off the river. *For example: launch and take-out sites; impacts of people coming into the area to partake in the activity, polluting the river; the sustainability of all products used in the activity; the impact the activity has on the people of the region; and ensuring water quality is not compromised.*

5.1 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

An activity provider shall develop and implement a policy to improve the sustainability of its operations and individual activities. It shall strive for implementation of national or international sustainability standards and certificates.

Sustainability policy shall be suitable to the size and scope of the organization, long-term, and shall address environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health, safety, risk and crisis management issues. It should drive continuous improvement of the activity providers in their sustainability performance.

Activity providers shall strive for implementation of GSTC recognized certificates, such as Travelife for Tour Operators. They shall also include in their value chain certified accommodations and business partners.

For Sustainability Policy template, go to Annex IV.

5.2 IMPACTS ON NATURE

An activity provider shall minimize harmful impacts of its operations on biodiversity, ecosystems, and the natural environment.

This is partially done by complying with laws and regulations (1.3). Additionally, activity providers shall make sure their activities do not cause pollution from unmanaged waste, that the size of their groups does not give impression of over-tourism, and that their activities do not damage ecosystems and infrastructure. Guides shall be adequately trained to understand these principles and communicate them to the participants.

5.3 SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

An activity provider shall eliminate single-use plastics from all the experiences it offers and replace it with environmentally friendly and biodegradable materials.

Water bottles, disposable toiletries, plastic bags, bin liners, food packaging and cups are among the biggest plastic polluters. Activity providers shall eliminate all these articles from their operations and encourage guests to do the same.¹¹

5.4 HUMAN RIGHTS

An activity provider shall respect the human rights of all participants in adventure travel activities and should not tolerate any type of discrimination.

Adventure travel guides meet many communities, families and individuals while carrying out their responsibilities and can set an example to participants and hosts alike by modeling respect for the rights of all humans engaged in adventure experiences.

5.5 RIVER PROTECTION

An activity provider shall conserve and protect local rivers and river environments and act against people/companies polluting the rivers or wanting to stop them from being free flowing.

Activity providers shall educate as to why rivers need to be kept clean and free flowing. They shall support those who are actively working on river protection.

5.6 BEST PRACTICES AND COMMUNICATION

An activity provider shall inform participants on best practices on sustainable travel and encourage them to follow sustainability principles, including waste disposal, respecting wildlife, and minimizing site alterations.

Activity providers shall prepare instructions and adequately train guides for this purpose.

The Leave No Trace Seven Principles¹² philosophy can be followed, which says:

- I) Plan ahead and prepare*
- II) Travel and camp on durable surfaces*
- III) Dispose of waste properly*
- IV) Leave what you find*
- V) Minimize campfire impacts*
- VI) Respect wildlife*
- VII) Be considerate of other visitors*

Another useful document to consider is UNWTO's The Responsible Tourist¹³.

¹¹ For more on SUP see Rethinking Single-use plastic products in Travel & Tourism: [UNEP / WTTC: Rethinking Single-Use Plastic Products in Travel & Tourism: Impacts, Managements Practices and Recommendations. June 2021](#)

¹² <https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>

¹³ <https://www.unwto.org/responsible-tourist>

5.7 LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT

An activity provider shall design activities which directly involve and support local communities or support local environment and biodiversity.

Activity providers shall support initiatives for local infrastructure and social community development especially in areas where they are particularly active and in areas where environmental awareness among the local population is low. Examples of initiatives include education, training, health and sanitation and projects which address the impacts of climate change. In selecting service providers and products/experiences to feature in programs, activity providers shall also favor those that engage with and support local communities.

6 CUSTOMER SERVICE

6.1 SAFETY INFORMATION

An activity provider shall communicate all relevant safety information to the guests and ask them for information that can affect safety management.

This information is usually provided during an introductory briefing and is reinforced during adventure activities using techniques that acknowledge cultural and linguistic diversity, such as props and other visual materials. Information shall be activity specific.

For rafting eg., agreed methods of communication within the group (signals and calls) shall be devised before the activity commences.

6.2 DATA PROTECTION

An activity provider shall collect, store, and use personal data according to legal regulations and requirements.

Activity providers must follow Law on Protection of Personal Data of BiH.

6.3 GUEST SATISFACTION

An activity provider shall systematically monitor customer satisfaction and take corrective actions for improvements.

Customer feedback shall be collected on-site (verbally or via surveys) and/or on-line (afterwards, either via e-mail or by searching customer ratings on webpages). A system shall be in place to analyze the results. Negative feedback shall be addressed with corrective actions. Also, organization shall provide feedback from customers to businesses and destinations visited or contracted.

6.4 COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

An activity provider shall have clear procedures in case of complaints from clients.

Complaint procedure shall be publicly available. All complaints shall be recorded and resolved quickly. For this purpose, activity providers shall train their staff to follow the procedure when handling complaints and that they have the power to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

7 QUALITY

7.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

An activity provider shall have a quality assurance policy in place to ensure that an ongoing quality improvement is an integral part of the organization. An activity provider shall strive for implementation of national or international quality standards and certificates.

Activity providers shall establish, continuously review and maintain the quality policy and quality objectives. The quality policy shall build on organization's objectives and values and be appropriate to the purpose and context of the organization. The policy shall be communicated, understood and applied throughout the organization and towards interested parties.

Activity providers can implement ISO 9001 as an international standard for Quality Management. It has also been recommended that activity providers in BiH opt for the Rafting Operator Accreditation (ROA) by IRF which will significantly improve safety and quality of their service.

For Quality Assurance Policy template, go to Annex V.

8 COVID-19

Following criteria apply during covid-19 pandemic to minimize covid-19 contamination risks.

Commercial rafting is not done by one individual, it requires small groups and a guide to be in proximity. On the other hand, rafting is done in small groups, where people are being splashed and washed often in a fully ventilated space.

8.1 RECOMMENDATIONS AND REGULATIONS

An activity provider shall follow local, regional, and national health authorities' recommendations and regulations on dealing with the covid-19 pandemic and implement all required measures.

Amongst other protocols, USAID Turizam covid-19 protocols are available to activity providers¹⁴.

8.2 SOCIAL DISTANCING

An activity provider shall reduce the number of people in groups and set social distancing parameters. Masks shall be worn when social distancing is not possible.

¹⁴ <https://academy.turizambih.ba/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Smjernice-i-protokoli-za-zdravstvenu-zastitu-od-COVID-19-u-turizmu.pdf>

Participant numbers shall be as low as reasonably possible. Activity providers shall consider offering private trips for people who prefer not to sit on a boat together with others. The choice of craft should also be considered and adapted where possible (eg. using rafts for 2 or 4 instead of 8).

Whenever a rafting operation involves more than one boat, each boat could be run as a “safety pod” from start to finish (preparation, activity and completion of tour) to minimize exposure to other people.

Physical distancing and/or mask wearing should be practiced as much as possible especially if it is a group of strangers and when using transportation, during close-proximity instruction, or in long stretches of flatwater. Also, briefing should be adapted to avoid the need to get close to guests, and spaces should be arranged for outfitting gear and (un)dressing.

8.3 CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

An activity provider shall define cleaning and disinfecting procedures for use of approved products according to manufacturers’ instructions.

Activity providers shall put emphasis on disinfection of high touch surfaces and regular cleaning frequency. Activity providers shall encourage participants to avoid sharing equipment and have their individual gear (e.g. personal flotation device, helmets, neoprene, splash tops ...).

8.4 HAND WASHING

An activity provider shall encourage its staff and guests to wash and sanitize hands.

Activity providers shall provide access to hand washing facilities and sanitizer and shall ask that guests sanitize hands when entering any building or office facilities, before starting an activity and as often as needed throughout the activity.

8.5 HEALTH SCREENING

An activity provider shall promote health screening by informing staff and guests to stay at home if they have symptoms or are in a household where someone has symptoms.

Activity providers shall ask guests before joining the activity to self-assess their physical condition and self-screen their risk profile.

8.6 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

An activity provider shall develop prompt emergency responses in cases when staff or guests test positive or have symptoms of covid-19.

Activity providers shall consider following factors when revising their emergency response plan: i) evacuation, especially in remote places; ii) procedures for guests and staff showing symptoms, incl. transportation, care, isolation and testing.

Activity providers shall strive to reduce the chance of a passenger falling overboard or the need for rescues since these will increase contact. They shall e.g. avoid waterplay, more challenging lines or more challenging rivers, and use more 'floor' or 'get down' commands.

8.7 AMENDMENT OF POLICIES

An activity provider shall review and amend their terms and conditions and refund and cancellation policies.

Activity providers shall allow for cancelations due to self-assessment, onset of symptoms, or last-minute advice against travel by healthcare providers. A new refund and cancellation policy shall be in place during the pandemic.

NOTE: If an activity provider already has an established and functional safety management system, all the measures proposed in Section 8 can be integrated in their existing system.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: Safety Management in Short

STEP 1	First establish a Safety Policy (2.1), a document which explains how you as an activity provider will manage health and safety in your business. This should be a collaborative process so involve your staff from the beginning (2.4 & 2.6.). Safety policy will provide a framework for setting safety objectives (2.2).
STEP 2	Define your safety goals and objectives (2.2). Think about what you need to do to achieve all your safety goals and write it down.
STEP 3	Develop all necessary supporting documentation (2.3) that will help you ensure safety. Primarily focus on defining and communicating safety procedures.
STEP 4	In addition to safety procedures, develop emergency and incidence response plans and procedures (2.7 & 2.8) which will give you clear guidance on what to do in case something goes wrong.

ANNEX II: Emergency Response Plan

Below you will find instructions on how to develop your emergency response plan as suggested in 2.7.

#1 Perform risk assessment

To shape an emergency response plan, you first need to assess all risks related to your activity. You will find more instructions on how to do this in Annex III.

#2 Assign roles and responsibilities

In case of an emergency, your staff needs to know their exact roles and responsibilities. Write down who does what, who calls whom, etc.

#3 Collect contact information

Make sure you know who to call in case of an emergency (police, fire department, ambulance, mountain rescue service...). Collect their contact details. Do not forget to collect emergency contacts also from your staff and guests in case something shall happen to them.

#4 Define post-emergency procedures and implement corrective measures

Define how you will communicate about the emergency with your staff and the public. Post-emergency procedures shall include an investigation into the emergency and consequently implementation of corrective measures.

ANNEX III: Risk Management in Short

STEP 1	Compile a list of all the activities you provide (3.1) so that you can assess risks related to each of the activities in the next step.
STEP 2	For each of the activities from the list, identify potential risks (3.2). Rate those risks so that you see what is most likely to go wrong, and address risks which are not acceptable (3.3). You can use the Risk Matrix below.

Risk Assessment Matrix

Likelihood		very likely	likely	unlikely	highly unlikely
Consequences	fatality	high	high	high	medium
	major injuries	high	high	medium	medium
	minor injuries	high	medium	medium	low
	negligible injuries	medium	medium	low	low

Assessing likelihood:

- very likely - expected to occur at least once during the task or activity
- likely - could occur during the task or activity
- unlikely - this could happen, although only in unusual circumstances
- highly unlikely - this could happen in exceptional circumstances

Assessing consequences:

- fatality – One or more fatalities. Post-traumatic stress disorder. Long term counselling / therapy is likely to be required. Loss of facilities or equipment. Significant and widespread environmental, financial, reputational or operational impact.
- major injuries – Serious injury or illness to one or more people, resulting in hospitalization and possible permanent disability. Therapy or counselling by a professional may be required. Sustained or extensive damage to facilities or equipment. Extensive environmental, financial, reputational or operational impact.
- minor injuries – Injury or illness requiring only First Aid (No permanent disability). Stressed beyond comfort level. Wants to leave activity. Isolated and quickly repaired damage to facilities or equipment. Some environmental, financial, reputational, or operational impact.
- negligible injuries – No injury or very minor injury or illness that does not require First Aid. Temporary stress or embarrassment. Minor or no damage to facilities or equipment. Little or no environmental, financial, reputational or operational impact.

ANNEX IV: Sustainability Policy Template

Company name

General sustainability commitment

State the general sustainability principles you believe in and that guide your daily operations. Focus on all aspects of sustainability: environment, labor and human rights, community integration, health and safety, quality.

Goals and Actions

State specific goals for each of the sustainability segments and write down what you will do to achieve them. Consider including bullets 5.1 – 5.7.

Examples:

To reduce the energy consumption in our company by 10 % before the end 2023, we will install LED lightning in all our offices, encourage our staff to regularly turn off lights and to close windows when heating is on, and introduce soft-mobility options in all our tours, wherever possible.

To preserve biodiversity and have a positive impact on biodiversity in our local environment, we will additionally train our guides, prepare new guidelines for guests and participate in fundraising activities for a local project to protect birds.

Name and surname of responsible person

Signature

Date

ANNEX V: Quality Assurance Policy Template

Company name

General quality assurance commitment

State the general quality assurance principles you believe in and that guide your daily operations. You should mention maintenance of high standards and the importance of ensuring quality for guests, staff and other stakeholders.

Activities

Describe the activities you are undertaking to assure quality.

Examples:

- *We are regularly monitoring guests' and staff feedback and making any necessary changes to our business as a result of that feedback.*
- *We continuously invest in training and education of our staff.*
- *Wherever possible, we measure the quality of our services.*

- ...

Name and surname of responsible person

Signature

Date

REFERENCES

ATTA (2020). Adventure Travel Covid-19 Health & Safety Guidelines. Last accessed 20 October 2021.

<https://www.adventuretravel.biz/COVID19guidelines/>

ATTA (2021). Adventure Travel Guide Standard. Last accessed 20 October 2021.

<https://www.adventuretravel.biz/education/guide-standard/>

Bosnia i Hercegovina Smjernice i protokoli za zdravstvenu zaštitu od covid-19 u turizmu. Last accessed 13 December 2021.

<https://academy.turizambih.ba/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Smjernice-i-protokoli-za-zdravstvenu-zastitu-od-COVID-19-u-turizmu.pdf>

GSTC Industry Criteria for Hotels and Tour Operators. Last accessed 20 October 2021.

<https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/gstc-industry-criteria/>

International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA). Last accessed 7 December 2021.

<https://www.imba.com/>

International Rafting Federation (IRF). Last accessed 20 October 2021.

<https://www.internationalrafting.com/>

ISO 21101:2014 Adventure Tourism - Safety Management Systems - Requirements. Last accessed 20 October 2021.

<https://www.iso.org/standard/54857.html>

ISO 21102:2020 Adventure Tourism - Leaders - Personnel Competence. Last accessed 20 October 2021.

<https://www.iso.org/standard/76475.html>

Leave no Trace. Last accessed 20 October 2021.

<https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>

Union of International Mountain Leader Associations (UIMLA). Last accessed 20 October 2021.

<https://uimla.org/>

U.S. Agency for International Development
1 Roberta C. Freasure Street
71000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Phone: 387 33 70 40 00
Fax: 387 33 219 298
Email: usaidсарajevo@usaid.gov