Codes of Conduct (CoC) for Peace Responsive Tourism in Pokhara: A Manual

Pranil Kumar Upadhayaya
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PTC                 NTB                  NCCR North-South

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Tourist area of Fewa Lake side in Pokhara/Pranil Kumar Upadhayaya

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The views and opinions expressed in this manual are entirely of the individual participants and institutions who were involved during the process of its formulation. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of the organizations with which the editors are affiliated.
Statement of Declaration

We, the following members/affiliates of Pokhara Tourism Council publicly announce that this Tourism Ethical Operation Codes of Conduct Manual is produced with our participations and consent. We extend our full commitment and hereby endorse and adopt this document.

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<td>Union of Trekking, Travels, Rafting and Airlines Workers’ Union (UNITRAV), Kaski</td>
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Preface and acknowledgments

This manual is the outcome of the collective efforts made by tourism practitioners, tourism researchers, and other stakeholders (local administration, security agency and CBOs) under Partnership Actions for Mitigating Syndromes (PAMS) project titled “Meeting the challenges of Peace-building in Tourism in Pokhara - Strengthening the Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethical Business Operation”.

The research and empirical engagements of this publication were conducted within the framework of the Research Project (RP) 6 (Business and Peace) of the third phase under the thematic node 1 (Institutions, Livelihoods, Conflicts with Swiss Peace Foundation as its institutional partners) of NCCR North-South: Research Partnerships for Mitigating Syndromes of Global Change, co-funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It is directly linked with the NCCR North-South associated PhD study of Mr. Pranil Upadhayaya in the interrelationship between tourism, conflict and peace held in Kathmandu University. This study was focused in Pokhara as one of the primary research sites. This research formed the primary and major basis of collective engagements and societal learning between the researchers and tourism practitioners on transdisciplinary approach in PAMS project. During the field study period of this research, people directly and indirectly related to tourism profession had responded with their feelings, perceptions and experiences regarding future needs and importance of responsible and sustainable development of tourism and thus envisioned the peace potential of tourism in Pokhara. After the beginning of the project work, a number of bilateral interactions with 22 organizations/associations and with media (which consist of all tourism and semi-tourism associations, tourism academicians, and the Federation of Nepalese Journalists, Pokhara) were held. Those interactions were followed by a regional seminar in Pokhara. Those programs and events identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of tourism entrepreneurs and of Pokhara as a tourist destination.
The executive members of all 22 organizations deserve sincere appreciation for offering their constructive inputs in formulating this manual.

Our sincere thanks go to five steering committee members of PAMS project namely Mr. Tikaram Sapkota, Mr. Bacchu Ram Tiwari, Mr. Surya Bhujel, Mr. Basanta Dawadi, and Mr. Chiranjibi Pokharel for their tireless supports to successfully execute each and every event under the PAMS project. Special thanks go to the members of District Tourism Development Committee (DTDC) of Kaski district who not only unanimously endorsed PAMS project as important element for the responsible development of tourism in Pokhara and agreed to support its execution but also formally endorsed the manuals on CSR and CoC of PAMS project after these documents became ready for the circulation. The DTDC is headed by Chief District Officer and participated by district level government administrative body, security body and PTC (as the umbrella organization of tourism industry in Pokhara).

PTC, NCCR and NTB would like to express sincere gratitude to the office of district administration, district security agency and media front for their cooperation in the process of formulating this manual. The publishers are also grateful to all tourism and non tourism organizations, associations and individuals that came in contact in the process of the formulation of this manual and also directly and indirectly participated in collecting views and writing this manual.

Finally, we are thankful to Laxman Gautam, manager at Nepal Tourism Board, for the language editing supports.

The Authors
April 2013
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Part One
1 Introduction

This document entitled ‘Codes of conduct for peace responsive tourism in pokhara: A manual’ aims at strengthening peace potential of tourism in Pokhara. It is the output of the ‘Partnership Actions for Mitigating Syndromes’ (PAMS) project titled “Meeting the challenges of Peace-building in Tourism in Pokhara – Strengthening the Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethical Business Operation” which has materialized the partnership actions among the researchers of the South Asia Regional Coordination Office of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR), North-South Kathmandu University and the practitioners of the tourism industry in Pokhara. These tourism practitioners are represented through Pokhara Tourism Council (PTC) which is the umbrella organization of 11 major professional tourism associations in Pokhara.

This manual is linked with research project (RP) 6 titled ‘Business and Peace’ under the thematic node 1 (Institutions, Livelihoods and Conflicts) of a number of research programmes of the NCCR North-South. RP 6 is involved in accessing the benefits and determinants of corporate private sector in peace promotion through the comparative case studies of a number of cases in South Asia, Central America and the Horn of Africa. The production of this manual is directly linked with a PhD research work held in the thematic area of ‘Tourism, Conflict and Peace’ in Kathmandu University in association with NCCR North-South. This research has assessed and analyzed ‘role of tourism in peace-building in Nepal’ with principal focus in Pokhara.

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world today. The exponential growth in the number of tourists from 25 million in 1950 to 1.035 billion in 2012 indicates it as one of the most remarkable economic
phenomena in present peace time (UNWTO 2013). The continuous growth of modern tourism industry has not only offered restorative holidays to tourists of generating regions but also created wide ranging positive implications in socio-cultural, economic and environmental spheres in receiving (host) regions. The remarkable growth induced such a potential positive benefits that it has drawn growing attention to tourism with a passion for peace. However, given that tourism is now one of the world’s most significant economic activities, the mere size and growing volume of the sector has not only a positive, but also negative impact on the social, cultural and natural environments. Such issues as related greatly to the issues and challenges of the sustainability of tourism are fundamentally those of values – moral issues. This situation also makes tourism a sensitive business activity in terms of the visitors’ perception about the destination. Being both: a leading industry and a social force of 21st century, tourism is sensitive to conflict and responsive to peace; and it can thrive only in peace.

Making tourism sustainable and responsible apart from its speedy growth is one of the seriously taken issues (needs) of global tourism in this context. Hence, due attention is necessary for the tourism activities for their sustainability as the hospitality behaviour and conservation of the products which need to be managed well for the sustainable development of tourism in any destination. These trends and issues of global tourism are undeniably applicable in developing countries like Nepal where some tourist destinations like Pokhara are really popular on their specific strengths and merits but also facing certain internal weakness and external threats.

Pokhara, a unique natural and cultural destination in Western region of Nepal, which has been appreciated as the land of paradise by tourists, has been popular among the domestic as well as international visitors. Pokhara received 230,799 international tourists and nearly similar number of domestic tourists in 2010. With the first historic ascent of Mt. Annapurna by French citizen Mauric Harjog in June 1950, Pokhara has not only received international media publicity for its exotic natural beauty but has also witnessed continuous increase in the international tourists arrivals since 1962 when the official record of tourists arrivals was only 6,179 (PTO 2011).

Growth in the number of tourists in Pokhara has contributed to the continuous increase in tourism business entrepreneurs and their varied tourism activities. This trend of tourism in Pokhara has made it a multifaceted and composite industry comprising the separate but functionally interdependent multiple sub-
sectors and their actors and making occupational institutions develop, operate and manage this industry.

With the increase of tourism entrepreneurs (e.g. existing 573 hotels, 21 tourist restaurants, 116 travel agencies, 81 trekking agencies, 18 paragliding companies, boat club, book stalls, money changers and a number of transport service provides like bus and taxi, trekking equipments and garments shops, and others, etc.) in providing their services to visitors, there are various sustainability challenges of tourism in Pokhara. Such challenges range from the problems of wastage deposition to traffic noise, from the lack of social security to socio-cultural degradation, from cultural influences to the exploitation of natural resources, etc.

Besides various rules, regulations and acts by the respective authorities to control and properly manage such unsustainable consequences; some voluntary and moral ethical interventions are obviously important for the responsible and sustainable development of tourism in Pokhara in the long run. The term “ethics” refers to a set of standards and values that an individual or a group follows to identify what is right and what is wrong. A number of such moral issues in the tourism industry are clearly stated in the United Nations (UN) 10 point principles of "Global Code of ethics for Tourism" (GCET). United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) states about GCET as an effective tool for the sustainability of tourism since the beginning of 21st century. The GCET provides guidelines for the morally responsible development of tourism. It has been instrumental in promoting and developing sustainable forms of tourism based on ethical principles. However, UNWTO focuses on the implementation of the GCET mainly at the central government level while adapting the principles by the private sector and the code’s implementation at the destination level is still to be conceived.

A gap obviously exists for the proper linkage on research, policy and practice and the sustainable management of the growth bound tourism industry of Pokhara. This manual titled ‘Codes of conduct for peace responsible tourism in pokhara: A manual' is largely based on universally accepted 10 principles of UNWTO's Global Code of ethics. Its core objective is to update and strengthen the peace potential of tourism in Pokhara. It is prepared by the partnership actions of all stakeholders (e.g. tourism practitioners, researchers, local administration, local security agencies, and local civil society).
2 Methodology

This manual is based on both secondary and primary sources of information. The secondary information consists mainly of the conceptual and theoretical aspects of sustainable and responsible tourism and the responsible and sustainable tourism guidelines of tourist destinations and tourism related institutions which are derived from the text books and internet sources. On the other hand the primary (first hand) information holds the foremost inclusion in the content of this manual which is acquired largely through face to face interactions (first hand information). Such opportunities had arisen at various live events in the process of the execution of annually designed planed events during the PAMS project period in Pokhara.

2.1 Knowledge background and the process of the PAMS project design

The PAMS project was conceptualized and materialized on the basis of accessing and analyzing the key knowledge findings of the PhD research-based field work in Pokhara and its surrounding on the thematic area of ‘Tourism, conflict and peace’. This scientific research, held in Kathmandu University in association with NCCR North-South in the year 2010-12, gave empirical basis to those research findings through PAMS project. The Project need was also based on the knowledge acquired from a national seminar titled ‘National Seminar on Role of Tourism for Sustainable Peace and Prosperity’ held in Pokhara on February 20, 2010 which was organized jointly by NCCR North-South JACS SAS, Kathmandu University and Trekking Agencies’ Association of Nepal (TAAN) Western Regional Association in conjunction with Pokhara Tourism Council and Nepal Tourism Board. The realization of the need of fulfilling the gap between policy and practice in due course of earlier research also formed the strong basis for this research cum development project design. For example, the point number 11 under working policy 9 dha and policy 8 na of the Paryatan Niti 2065 (Tourism Policy 2009) reveals “पर्यटन व्यवसायीहरूमा व्यवसायिकताको विकास गर्न आ आफ्नो व्यवसायीक स्वघर्म माफि आचार सहित बनाई लागू गर्न प्रोत्साहन गरिने छ” (it will be motivated to implement Codes of conduct through own professional associations to develop professionalism in tourism) (MoTCA 2009). Furthermore, the concept paper of the national planning commission also clearly states that ‘Codes of conduct for tourism business will be implemented through their own associations’ (NPC 2010, p 98). However, these visions are kept away from being materialized.

PTC was selected as an executing agency for the PAMS project not only
because of its position as an umbrella organization of eleven major tourism professional associations in Pokhara but also due to its active involvement as a pressure group by its constitutional mandate to provide visionary suggestions and valuable ideas to the government to assist in formulating sound plans and policies for the sustainable and responsible development of tourism in Pokhara.

2.2 Source of information

NTB Pokhara and the tourism associations in Pokhara which are the members of PTC like PCCI, PRHA, TAAN WRA, NATTA RAP, REBAN Pokhara Chapter, TEA, PBEA, TESA Pokhara, EGA Pokhara, NAA, the leaders of tourism labour unions (e.g. ANTWA, UNITRAV and NTWU), and the executives of these tourism associations were the chief informants for primary information.

Similarly, various indirectly tourism related agencies like FBEA, PHEA, Money Changer Association, Cyber Association, NMA Annapurna Chapter, CITY REAN Pokhara, HRS Pokhara, Book Association, Community Development Service Center-Baidam, civil societies (local Mothers’ Groups and Youth Clubs), bureaucrats of local administration, representatives of local media (i.e. Federation of Nepalese Journalists Kaski), security agencies, representatives of NGOs and CBOs (e.g. ACAP, EWA Nepal, GLC Trust Pokhara, Heralo Prathisthan, and Solidarity Forum Pokhara) were the secondary sources of information for the study.

On secondary source of information, ten guiding principles of Global Code of ethics in Tourism of UNWTO formed the key basis. Furthermore, the various internationally published materials on CoC guidelines of PATA, codes of conduct in tourism of Sikkim (India), Bhutan, Thailand, Hong Kong (China), Australia, South Africa, etc. were also other sources at international level.

2.3 Transdisciplinarity as a major methodological process

Transdisciplinary (TD) approach has remained as a key thrust on the methodological process of this research. TD highlights the collaboration between science (scientific actors) and society (societal actors) for a common purpose (Heim et al 2011). TD as an emerging approach of research on global change and SD is conceptual framework of PAMS project under NCCR North-South that constitute researchers, practitioners, and local communities as collective actors with common goal of small scale development interventions. Transdisciplinary approach uses a methodology which tries to identify syndromes as well as possible answers or solutions to mitigate them by developing participatory approaches. It allows the transfer of local expert knowledge into more
comprehensive conceptual structures (Goetschel 2012).

The partnership process of the engagements of the researchers and practitioners through TD included a range of events which are depicted in table 1.

**Table 1: Series of events with their key thrusts in the process of CoC formulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. N.</th>
<th>Name of events</th>
<th>Date of organizations</th>
<th>Key thrusts and milestones</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Formal launching of PAMS project coinciding with the 11th Annual General Meeting of Pokhara Tourism Council</td>
<td>24 September 2011</td>
<td>Dissemination of information for the public through media and building networking</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Presentation about PAMS project and its work plan to the private sector of tourism</td>
<td>29 September 2011</td>
<td>Highlight and clarification of aims, objectives, and methodology of PAMS and getting credibility</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Presentation about PAMS project and its work plan to the District Tourism Development Committee of Kaski District which is headed by Chief District Officer and represented by government security and private sector of tourism in Pokhara</td>
<td>28 October 2011</td>
<td>Acquiring of the formal endorsement from the government sector of tourism</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>One to one bilateral consultations and interactions with all tourism associations</td>
<td>Various dates in the years 2011-2012</td>
<td>Identification of issues in depth and breadth</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Organization of the first regional stakeholders’ interactions titled ‘Meeting the Challenges of Peace-building in Tourism in Pokhara’ at Lumle, Pokhara</td>
<td>6 December 2012</td>
<td>Presentation and interactions on SWOT of all organizations</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Orientation cum training to the board members of all member tourism associations of PTC to capacitate them on the application of CSR guidelines</td>
<td>20 November 2012</td>
<td>Mutual learning and reflections through debates, discussions and interactions</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Formal launching of CoC manual coinciding with CSR guidelines with media interactions</td>
<td>20 April 2013</td>
<td>Formal dissemination of information on CoC</td>
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Source: Compiled by authors
As per table 1, separate interaction programs were organized with a total of 22 professional organisations under the transdisciplinary approach in order to identify the real issues and problems through the analysis of their Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT).

2.4 Analysing tools

The SWOT as an analyzing tool (instrument) had been used to find the organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of various associations in the tourism sector of Pokhara. Participants from different organizations expressed strengths and weakness within their organizations in the context of responsible and sustainable development of tourism. Similarly, they pointed out further opportunities and threats of tourism development from wider environment of tourism sector. The views of the respective stakeholders are important bases to identify the opportunities and challenges of tourism at destination level. The outcomes from the series of interactions with these organizations were presented by the authorities of the respective organization in a joint regional level workshop held at Lumle Agricultural Centre, Kaski on 6 December 2011.
Internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats pertaining to the 22 tourism and semi-tourism organizations were identified and common consensuse were built among the participants in the workshop. This regional workshop resulted in the publication of a proceeding (Upadhayaya and Khatiwada 2012). This proceeding served as a strong foundation to identify positive and sustainable practices and involvements to be strengthened and negative and irresponsible behaviours and practices to be mitigated as well as abolished. All these refined information formed the information materials for CoC manual that consists of Dos and Don’ts of a total of thirteen organizations or stakeholders. This first draft of the CoC manual formulation was further discussed with the executive committee members of the respective organizations to get their feedback and give the manual a final shape. It was finally passed by respective organizations through their board meetings in February 2013.

The manual was finally declared at a grand event ‘Pokhara Declaration 2013’ amidst the participation of all stakeholders held in April 2013 in Pokhara. Thus, the methodological process of the integrated efforts based on the transdisciplinary approach among researchers, tourism business actors and workers of tourism is a pioneer effort to attain sustainable and responsible development of tourism in Pokhara.
3 Sustainable tourism: a catalyst for peace sensitivity

The term sustainable tourism (ST) is a derivative of the more general concept of sustainable development whose concept had emerged with a report of World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) through Brundtland Commission in 1987.

Sustainable tourism is about making tourism economically efficient while at the same time safeguarding the environment and promoting social and cultural progress. These three aspects under ST are interconnected with each other (Kruk, Hummel and Banskota 2007). Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. Thus, tourism to be sustainable should: (a) make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity, (b) respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance, and (c) ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Tourism Concern 1991 has mentioned the nine points as principles of sustainable tourism for the quality of tourism which are given as;

a) Using resources sustainably

b) Maintaining biodiversity

c) Integrating tourism into planning

d) Supporting local economies

e) Involving local communities

f) Consulting stakeholders and the public

g) Training staff

h) Marketing tourism responsibly

i) Undertaking research
Sustainable tourism needs to maintain a high level of tourists’ satisfaction and to ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists. Sustainable tourism also requires raising awareness about sustainability issues among visiting tourists and promoting sustainable tourism practices by tourists themselves.

The global significance of sustainable tourism is associated for peace building due to tourism’s potential for poverty alleviation, equitable distribution of income, local economic development, creation of job opportunities, and conservation of environment. Tourism affects so many other sectors and is a critical economic driver in low income countries. UNWTO, with its belief that tourism can be effectively used as a force for the elimination of global poverty and peace-building, has made a commitment to contribute to the UN Millennium Development Goals through a new programme known as Sustainable Tourism - Eliminating Poverty (STEP) in 2003 (Upadhayaya and Sharma 2010). However, sustainability of tourism is precondition in this regard (Dodds and Joppe 2005).

Thus, tourism if fulfilled with sustainable characteristics and practices can be catalyst for peace building. This is why the need of the sustainable tourism development has remained as an important issue in the ever changing trend of global tourism. There are some milestones in making the development of tourism sustainable. The adoption of ‘Agenda 21 (an agenda for action) for the Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development’ as a sectoral sustainable tourism development programme in 1996 is a significant step in this regard which is based on the results of the Rio Earth Summit, 1992 (Bagri 2003, p 157). This document not only provides guidelines for travel and tourism industry, government, and travel and tourism companies for sustainability of tourism sector as a whole, but also emphasises the importance of partnership between government, industry and non-government organizations as to accrue enormous benefits in making the travel and tourism industry sustainable.

Thus, responsible/sustainable tourism emphasizes both: multiple focuses which are directed towards all relevant actors and beneficiaries and a sensible approach which is bound toward the partnership actions among all key stakeholders in a coordinated basis. However, attending the sustainability of tourism has become more challenging to both the developed and developing countries as well. In this context, Murphy (1994, p 267) stressed for four pronged strategy approach for sustainable development of tourism as;
a) Consumer awareness and education  
b) Tourism industry actions  
c) Destination planning and development and  
d) An expanded concept of marketing ecotourism to developing countries.

Above strategies undeniably indicate the requirement of the informed participations of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong umbrella leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it also requires constant monitoring of impacts and introducing the necessary preventive and corrective measures whenever necessary. Thus the dynamic of the sustainable tourism underscores the need to develop standard codes of conduct as commonly accepted guidelines and disseminate accurate and reliable information to all parties involved in tourism for its sustainability and peace sensitivity.

4 Codes of conduct and its relevance for responsible and sustainable tourism

The tourism Codes of conduct is defined as an “Ethical Road Map” to guide the sector’s key-players through tourism landscape in minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and on cultural heritage while maximizing the benefits for residents of tourism destinations (UNWTO 2011). A number of tourism experts and scholars have stated about the need and importance of Codes of conduct for responsible and sustainable tourism.

Dhakal (2003) opines that tourism is sustainable only if the beneficiaries are encouraged and empowered to take the lead role in formulation of policies and plans and their command in translating those policies and priorities in actions. Highlighting the importance of enabling host tourism countries to develop their own legislative and general legal and policy framework, Downes (2006) emphasizes their utilities to meet the specific requirements of local socio-economic and environmental situations of these host countries. However, John Downes also necessitates maintaining consistency with the various existing overall international and regional standards and guidelines.

The codes of conduct are targeted at four main groups in tourism sector i.e. industry, tourist and host and government. Malloy and Fennell (1998) conducted a content analysis of tourism-related codes of ethics and found that most statements (44.9%) were directed to tourists followed by industry (35.3%), hosts (13.8%) and government (6.0%), and that the majority were deontological
(concerned with rules) rather than teleological (concerned with outcomes). Within tourism industry, there are increasing number of professional codes of conduct designed especially for accommodation facilities and other service providers (Fennell and Malloy 2010).

The Global Code of ethics for Tourism is a frame of reference for the responsible and sustainable development of tourism at global scale. It is a comprehensive set of following 10 principles designed to guide and address key-players in tourism development like governments, the travel industry, communities and tourists alike.

1. Tourism's contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies
2. Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfilment
3. Tourism, a factor of sustainable development
4. Tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and contributor to its enhancement
5. Tourism, a beneficial activity for host countries and communities
6. Obligations of stakeholders in tourism development
7. Right to tourism
8. Liberty of tourist movements
9. Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry
10. Implementation of the principles of the Global Code of ethics for Tourism

It aims to help minimize the negative impact of tourism on environment, cultural heritage and societies while maximizing the benefits of tourism in promoting an equitable, responsible and sustainable world tourism order (UNWTO 2012b).

The GCET is designed to help the industry achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals by safeguarding the future of the tourism industry, expanding the sector’s contribution to economic prosperity, peace and understanding among all the stakeholders. It draws inspirations from many earlier declarations and instruments\(^1\) which add new thinking that reflects

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our changing society at the beginning of the 21st century. With international tourism forecast to reach 1.6 billion arrivals by 2020, UNWTO believes that the GCET is needed to help minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and cultural heritage and maximize the benefits for residents of tourism destinations.

Although it is not a legally binding document, article 10 of GCET provides for a voluntary implementation mechanism through the recognition of the role of the world committee on tourism ethics to which stakeholders may refer on a voluntary basis in any matters concerning the application and interpretation of the codes.

For the effective implementation, the GCET also emphasizes the need of mutual cooperation in implementing it as it states that integrity must be the winning edge because ethical tourism is in the best interest of all involved stakeholders. CoC could be appropriate means for responsible tourism. Responsible tourism represents an approach of engaging with tourism, be that a tourist, a tourism business supplier, local community of any tourist destination, and any other tourism stakeholder at a destination. The Cape Town Declaration of Responsible Tourism highlights about responsible tourism as an economically viable, socio-culturally acceptable and environmentally friendly (Responsible Tourism 2012).

Economic viability is related to generating economic benefits for local people through increasing their access, capacity, and role in decision making. Socio-cultural acceptability reveals about the capacity of tourism to minimize the negative social impacts and positive contribution to the conservation of cultural heritage. The environmental friendliness of responsible tourism necessitates minimizing negative environmental impacts and supports positive contribution of tourism to the conservation of natural heritage and the maintenance of the world’s diversity. The other key essence of responsible tourism is that it provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people and respect and exchange between tourists and hosts.

Responsible tourism emphasizes that all stakeholders are responsible for the kind of tourism they develop or are engaged in. Whilst different groups will see responsibility in different ways, the shared understanding is that responsible tourism should entail an improvement in tourism. Tourism should become ‘better’ as a result of the responsible tourism approach. The objective of responsible tourism is to create better places for people to live in and to visit where CoC guidelines will be the blueprint for their voluntary contribution.
Responsible tourism is an aspiration that can be realized in different ways in different originating markets and in the diverse destinations of the world.

5 Practice of CoC in tourism sector: International and national perspective

CoC on tourism sector is practised at both international and national perspectives. Both perspectives are described on following paragraphs.

5.1 Practice of CoC from international perspective

Though the guiding principles of GCET are a recent phenomenon with a period of one decade, a number of tourist destinations and tourism related institutions have been practising Codes of conduct at different capacities in tourism for long time. Tourist destinations like Sikkim (India), Bhutan, Hong Kong, Australia, and South Africa have been practicing CoC in tourism industry. The summit/declaration like Cape Town Declaration and institutions like Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), Union of Asia Alpine Association (UAAA), and Worldwide Fund for Wildlife (WWF) are INGOs and professional organizations which are notable to develop and implement CoCs in tourism sector. Amidst these tourist destinations with diverse focuses for strengthening responsible and sustainable tourism, Hong Kong’s attention is on tourist guides for their accountability for responsible tourism and Canada’s focus is on tourists for their responsible roles to minimise the negative impact to be caused by tourism activities.

In the list of declarations and institutions, Cape Town Declaration adopted after the Cape Town Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations by 280 delegates from 20 countries in 2002 provides guiding principles for economic, social and environmental responsibility.

The Union of Asia Alpine Association with 178 nations as its members held its Annual General Assembly in Portugal in 2010. It approved a code of service (“as guidelines”) as a beacon of mountaineering values, spelling out ethics of sportsmanship, respect for cultures and care for the environment. This document was named as UIAA Mountain Ethics Declaration. PATA and APEC have jointly developed codes of sustainable tourism to encourage environment and culture friendly tourism activities.
The AITO, an organization representing around 160 of Britain’s best specialist tour operators has developed the responsible tourism guidelines through addressing product improvements, professional services, financial security and environmental awareness. The Tourism Concern, a Britain based NGO, has developed the codes of conduct in order to save precious natural resources, support the local trades and crafts, recognize the land rights, respect for local etiquette and be up to date with the current affairs of the host place. American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) has developed ten Commandments of ecotourism for its sustainability.

5.2 Practice of CoC from national perspective

The practice of CoCs is a new concept in Nepal and such conducts at destination level are virtually lacking. However, there are some tourism related institutions and programs like ACAP, TRPAP, TAAN, and Fewa Boat Association (FBA) which have built such conducts. ACAP is one of the pioneer institutions to introduce minimum impact code which has incorporated issues like conservation of forests, stopping pollution, protecting the wild life and respecting local people’s culture. TRPAP is one of the latest projects in tourism area which had set the guidelines to the visitors. Such guidelines emphasized to reduce negative impacts on environment through managing garbage and wastage, avoiding the use of firewood and deforestation, conserving environment and encouraging the use of home-stay by visitors to support the local livelihoods.

TAAN has developed Trekking and Mountaineering Business Codes of conduct – 2066. Highlighting the need of the CoC, TAAN mentions that ‘instead of providing quality service and doing fair competition by practicing socially responsible tourism practices and activities, the tourism service providers are practicing unhealthy price war. Because of such unethical activities, there are high chances that the industry will further deteriorate in the future.’ (Shrestha 2009, p 9). FBA has brought 11 points codes of conduct in execution with the aims of professional and respectful development of tourist boat entrepreneurs (Upadhayaya and Khatiwa 2012). There are increased thought provoking theoretical and practical expressions on the formulation and operation of codes of conduct by the direct participations and inputs of local stakeholders in above mentioned different scopes of codes of conduct.
6 Trends of tourism and the issues of codes of conduct for the sustainability of tourism in Pokhara

The picturesque town of Pokhara lies on the lap of the snow-capped mountains of the Himalayan Range. Pokhara, a unique natural and cultural destination, has been popular among the domestic as well as international visitors. There are enormous natural and cultural attractions for tourism in Pokhara which offer strategic position for the entry and exist points for trekking and other adventure activities (e.g. paragliding, ultra light aircraft, mountain expedition, sky diving, rock climbing, river rafting, etc.) in Dhaulagiri and Annapurna mountain areas in Western Development Region (Khatiwada 2004, 2007; NCCR and TAAN WRC 2010; NTB 2011; RHA 2007; Tripathi 2008).

The abundance of tourism resources, all-the-year pleasant weather condition, non-stop tourism related events and activities, and well established service and hospitality standards are inherited strengths and opportunities for tourism in Pokhara. Tourism remains here as the centre of mountain economy not only for Greater Pokhara but also beyond Pokhara Valley. The modern development of tourism in Pokhara started after 1960s. The number of tourists visiting Pokhara has increased steadily since 1970. Table 2 offers a glimpse of international tourists’ arrivals data in last 35 years in Pokhara, in Nepal, share of Pokhara in the total arrivals in Nepal and comparative change in every five years than earlier five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>International tourist arrivals in Pokhara</th>
<th>% change in every five years in comparison to earlier five years</th>
<th>International tourist arrivals in Nepal</th>
<th>Share of Pokhara in total arrivals of Nepal %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976-80</td>
<td>147,007</td>
<td></td>
<td>715,733</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-85</td>
<td>172,056</td>
<td>17.03</td>
<td>874,145</td>
<td>19.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-90</td>
<td>272,419</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>1,232,184</td>
<td>22.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-95</td>
<td>310,669</td>
<td>14.04</td>
<td>1,610,841</td>
<td>19.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-2000</td>
<td>483,757</td>
<td>55.71</td>
<td>2,234,304</td>
<td>21.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-05</td>
<td>310,625</td>
<td>-35.79</td>
<td>1,735,532</td>
<td>17.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-10</td>
<td>974,512</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>2,523,731</td>
<td>38.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MoTCA (2012); PTO (2011)

In 2010, there were 230,799 international and nearly same number of domestic tourists in pokhara. The above trend of growth on international tourist arrivals combined with domestic visitors in the excellent natural and cultural attractions of Pokhara have brought a number of opportunities for the betterment of
socio-economic change and living standards of the people. The huge increment in tourist facilities and services along with the increase of tourist arrivals have not only catered the needs of services and satisfaction of tourists but also rendered enormous benefits to host communities by creating thousands of tourism-based employments and income. Even various non-tourist actors are also benefiting indirectly from tourism. However, these trends at the same time have also become challenging to manage negative impacts on socio-cultural life, environment and natural resources.

Though the agendas of the transformation of Nepalese tourism with responsible cum sustainable characteristics are on forefront with some remarkable initiations like institutional setup of Sustainable Tourism Network at Nepal Tourism Board, sustainable tourism product development instigation (e.g. Organization of Marketing Assistance to Nepal for Sustainable Tourism Product 2007-08) and recently brought policy changes (e.g. New Tourism Policy, 2009 and Home Stay Work Procedure 2010) in tourism of Nepal (STN 2012; Allis 2008; MoTCA 2009, 2010). However, such initiations are largely confined at macro level. The policy thrusts have very little impacts on practical applications at micro level at tourist destinations like Pokhara. In such context, Pokhara is facing enormous challenges on its way to excel its responsible, sustainable and qualitative development. Such challenges have appeared both from internal as well as external environment (outside of tourism). Such outer and inner challenges have created threats for its sustainability which cannot be oversighted.

Amidst such challenges of tourism, there are manifestations of a number of internal challenges in tourism sector in Pokhara. There are continuity and increment of the structural conflicts inside tourism in Pokhara Valley. Such challenging issues include intra-organizational conflict (e.g. lack of amicable labour-management relationships in absence of codes of conduct) amidst large number of small and medium enterprises, inter-organizational conflict (e.g. unhealthy competition on price and the management), irresponsible tourism-created social problems (e.g. sporadic drug abuses, sexual abuse, security problems and crime in tourist lakeside area), unsustainable tourism-induced deteriorating environmental conditions (lack of proper management of garbage and wastage) and various pollutions surrounding main tourist centre of Fewa lakeside area. Such challenges in a state of the lack of responsible tourism practices of corporate business sector of tourism are bitter true.

The external challenges include political instability-induced sporadic conflicts, sporadic bandha (closures), strikes, wheel strikes, vandalism, uncontrolled political demonstrations organized by political parties, and social institutions
in context of the present fragile transition of Nepal. Such challenges appear as external challenges to tourism. Such other challenges include encroachments into open spaces and cultural and natural heritage sites (lake, river, religious sites etc.), poor infrastructures, bottlenecks on international connections for international visitors directly from and to Pokhara, and insufficient surface accessibility from Indian border cities.

In this context, the research of NCCR had found lack of integrated responsible efforts and concerted actions on sustainable and responsible tourism practices among all tourism stakeholders as a major drawback in the course of preventing the negativity in the tourism sector in Pokhara Valley. The weak structural capacity and lack of collective awareness, knowledge, information, skill, confidence, positive thinking and institutional capacity are attributed for such consequences. Lack of awareness and proper knowledge (learning), confidence, training skills and required institutional efforts have made the corporate tourism sector reluctant to apply CoC. Furthermore, a level of minimum cooperation among various tourism associations which are member organizations of PTC in Pokhara are also missing due to the lack of mutual understanding and learning of core problems of the escalation of conflicts (Upadhayaya and Khatiwada 2012).

The work of Khatiwada (2007), NCCR (2012), Tripathi (2007), Upadhayaya (2011), Upadhayaya and Khatiwada (2012) ascertained above challenges by marking the deficiency on the collective knowledge and informed actions on CSR and CoC by tourism sector in Pokhara. Adhikari and Ghimire (2003 as cited in Ghimire and Upreti 2011, p 60) state that ‘uncontrolled tourism business is threatening environmental justice in Pokhara, and this seems to be a common hurdle associated with a long-lasting tourism industry’. Such challenges are weakening the potential of tourism to reap its potential for social prosperity and peace. The no-existence of tourism operation ethical codes of conduct on holistic basis at destination level and also the lack of the up-scaling (thrust) on corporate social responsibility of tourism sector in absence of CSR guidelines were seen as major gaps on mutual knowledge and actions to achieve sustainable development of tourism in Pokhara. These states stand as bottleneck for the qualitative development of tourism sector and also threaten its sustainability in Pokhara, according to Tika Ram Sapkota (personal communication, 14 August 2011).

In the above context when the need of indigenous tourism planning and practices framed with responsible tourism guidelines on bottom up approach is realized, this manual on CoC is prepared for the peace responsive sustainable tourism sector in Pokhara.
Part Two
Codes of conduct for peace responsive tourism in Pokhara

The paragraphs below offer the specific codes of conduct in the forms of Dos and Don’ts for a total of 13 different actors with their preliminary short introductory profile in Pokhara.

7 Codes of conduct for Paschimanchal Hotel Association (PHA), Pokhara

Introduction
PHA Pokhara is an umbrella organization of tourists' accommodations headquarterd in Pokhara and scattered in 16 districts of Western Development Region. It was established by the unification of the then Regional Hotel Association and Pokhara Hotel Association in Chaitra 2065 B.S. (March 2009 A.D.). There are more than four hundred members of PHA at present which includes star hotels, tourist standard hotels, lodges and resorts. PHA has been playing a lead and coordinating role in the overall development of tourism apart from concentrating professional betterment and protection of its members in particular. There are following core objectives of this association.

a. To preserve and promote the natural and cultural heritage sites and support for environmental sanitation and conservation
b. To promote the tourism of Western Region of Nepal in national and international tourism markets through electronic and print media
c. To organize or conduct the short time skill-based trainings to develop skilled human resources in hotel sub-sector in tourism
d. To participate in the national and international fairs, festivals and tourism marts for the promotion of tourism of this region
e. To take initiation and act as a pressure group to develop the Western Region as the destination of adventure, pleasure, pilgrimage, meeting,
incentive, convention, and exhibition and rural tourism on the basis of their feasibility.

PHA is involved in various promotional campaigns like "Jaun Hai Pokhara" (Let’s Go to Pokhara) targeted to domestic tourists in home market, "Chaliye Pokhara" (Let’s Go to Pokhara) targeted to Indian tourists in neighbouring market and "Pokhara is pure and perfect" targeted to tourists in China, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, etc. in both neighbouring and emerging markets. PHA is also actively engaged in hosting various promotional events like "Bhaitika" (Brothers and Sisters Day) during Deepawali (festival of light) and "Tourism, food and cultural festival" during Nepali New Year (as Fewa New Year) to promote the outstanding attractions and hospitality reflection of Pokhara. PHA publishes Tourism News Bulletins and Hotel Information Directory which cover the brief information and activities of its member hotels. It has also developed online tourism portals like www.phap.org.np and www.pokhara-hotels.org to promote hotels located in Pokhara and its surrounding areas in Western Development region in global market. PHA is notably involved in various social activities as well. Such involvements include offering supports to people affected by natural calamities (e.g. flood victims), cleaning water hyacinth from Fewa Lake, supporting sanitation program by constructing toilets for the needy families, contributing to Fewa Conservation Fund and being involved in the cleaning of Seti River.

All the members of PHA agree and commit to following Dos (guidelines as desirable) and Don’ts (guidelines as not desirable) as tourism ethical operation Codes of conduct in the management and operation of our businesses for the healthy development of hotel sub-sector in specific and tourism in general in Pokhara and Western Development Region of Nepal.

Dos

Assurance of legal existence
PHA will initiate its best to ensure that all tourist accommodations operating in Western Development Region are formally registered with the respective governmental authority before coming to operation.

Use of local raw materials
All members of PHA will give the highest emphasis in the use of consumable local resources like vegetables, dairy products, fruits, etc. as inputs in producing
different items of food and beverage. This trend would create and enhance local supply linkages, strengthen local absorptive capacities, prevent leakages and benefit the local suppliers.

**Consistency in matching of price-standard**
PHA will maintain consistency in range of price for the similar standard of rooms and quality of food and services of member tourist accommodations in order to bring uniformity while maintain utmost quality in serving clients.

**Marketing and promotional campaigns**
PHA will conduct the regular marketing and promotional campaigns in the major cities of Nepal, India, China and other countries in global market and food festivals with local traditional and cultural activities in Pokhara.

**Hygiene, sanitation, safety and peaceful atmosphere in tourist accommodations**
PHA will ensure the highest level of hygiene and sanitation at all important places (e.g. kitchen, dining hall, guests’ rooms, bars, swimming pool, etc.) and in producing and serving all consumable items (e.g. food and drinks) by using natural friendly items in eco-friendly manner. It shall be active to make certain that the all member tourist accommodations have peaceful and pleasant atmosphere for guests in a context where guests are highly valued.

**Wastage management for healthy environment**
PHA would encourage the use of recycled wastage and garbage that come from tourist accommodations and differentiate the degradable from non-degradable waste disposals to manage healthy and clean environment.

**Inclusive employment, proper remuneration and capacity building to service providing workers**
All PHA member hotels will do their best to make the employments inclusive by giving jobs to women and disadvantaged local people in their properties. All members of PHA will ensure to provide salary and allowances to all workers based on the mutual negotiations between hotel owners and trade unions. Such negotiations will take care of minimum salary scale fixed by the state authority; however it should have been agreed earlier by PHA. All members of PHA will regularly conduct trainings and orientations on guests’ hospitality and
Facilities and efficiency in service delivery
All members of PHA would consider the highest efficiency on hospitality, reliability, and punctuality of service providers in tourist accommodations as their prime business ethics to excel on services and facilities delivered to tourists. PHA will try to increase the number of member hotels which are practicing the offering of rooms and lavatory for physically disabled customers. All PHA members will ensure that their service providing representatives are in proper uniforms and identity cards while receiving guests at airport and bus parks. PHA will initiate for going green for all member hotels in future.

Fulfilment of corporate social responsibility
All members of PHA will continue to fulfil their obligations to society by being involved in various corporate social responsibilities which they have been doing for the betterment of nature, people and culture of Pokhara and in the whole Western Development Region both during normal time and natural calamities for long time.

Don’ts
Unhealthy competition
All members of PHA will not do any compromise on offering quality food and beverage products and services as per PHA standard of rates to guests to avoid any possibility of the negative destination image of Pokhara.

Inappropriate set up of amenities
The members of PHA will not set up bed rooms, toilets, bathrooms and kitchens (food production centre) in dark, unhygienic and air blocking conditions. All rooms will be open and hygienic to sleep and kitchen to prepare the healthy food stuffs.

Immoral uses and exploitation of workers
All members of PHA Pokhara will necessarily avoid the uses of child labourers, women, old aged and physically challenged people for those works which are risky and unsafe for them in tourist accommodations.
Irresponsible waste disposal
The members of PHA will not deposit wastage and dirty water in the open drainage or road side nearby hotels and lodges or any public places in order to stop the unhygienic trend, behaviour and environmental pollution.

Inequality and unethical services to guests
The members of PHA must ensure that there is not a single evidence of partiality and misbehavior among the guests on the basis of their castes, creeds, races, colours, places of residents (e.g. domestic and international), etc.

Undesirable activities
All the members of PHA commit to not to allow, support or encourage guests to do any kind of socially undesirable and illegal activities (e.g. drugs abuse, narcotics, sex abuse, etc.) in tourist accommodations for more income and easy money.

 Strikes and closure
All members of PHA and their workers will avoid the trend of calling closure or strikes especially in tourism zone(s) to demonstrate their professional discontents and dissatisfactions especially when they are on duty which may cause discomfort and disrespect to the valued customers.
8 Codes of conduct for Trekking Agencies’ Association of Nepal, Western Regional Association, Pokhara

Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal (TAAN), Western Regional Association (WRA) is a professional association of 75 agencies which are involved in trekking tourism business, operation and management in Pokhara and Western Nepal. Being operated in accordance with the Bidhan (constitution) of TAAN 2072 B.S. (2015 A.D.), this association was first established in 1982 and was affiliated with TAAN central as a Western Regional chapter.

There are following objectives of TAAN WRA which aims to contribute for the overall development and promotion of mountain tourism and sustainable conservation of mountain environment.

a) To protect the professional rights and drive the member trekking agencies in a unified manner.

b) To help to support on livelihoods and living standards of local people of mountain regions

c) To help to upgrade the professional competency and leadership of members companies

d) To help to prepare and upgrade the competence of human resources involved in trekking tourism

e) To research, identify, study and promote new alternative trekking routes

f) To review and strengthen the services and facilities to trekking workers and supporters (porters)

g) To advice Nepal government in deciding trekking tourism related various policies, plans, and programs

h) To enhance the knowledge, skill and capabilities of local people who are involved in home-stay tourism in various mountain villages in Western Nepal
TAAN WRA has been actively working individually as well as collectively with other organizations (e.g. government organization, non-government organization, semi-government organization, researcher institutions, etc.) in fulfilling above objectives.

All the members of TAAN WRA agree and commit to following Dos (guidelines as desirable) and Don’ts (guidelines as not desirable) as tourism ethical operation Codes of conduct in the management and operation of our businesses for the healthy development of trekking tourism activities from Pokhara and Western Region of Nepal.

**Dos**

**Efficiency on service delivery**
All members of TAAN WRA would consider the efficiency, reliability, punctuality and hospitality of services as its prime business ethics to excel on services offered to trekking tourists. All members will utilize the services of trained and license holder trekking guides while operating trekking tourism in different trekking routes. The member agencies will ensure the effective communication with their guests in providing tourism products and services. The members of TAAN WRA will clearly brief trekkers about the benchmark of services and products while negotiating sales.

**Assurance of legal existence of trekking agencies**
TAAN WRA will do its best to ensure that the trekking agencies operating in Pokhara and western region are formally registered in the concerned government authority before coming to operation.

**Remuneration and social security of support staff**
All members of TAAN WRA will ensure that they provide salary and allowances to all service providing workers based on the mutual negotiations between TAAN WRA and trekking tourism workers’ unions. Such negotiation will take care of the minimum salary scale fixed by the state authority; however it would be agreed earlier by TAAN WRA. All members of TAAN WRA will work in such a way that they minimize the physical risk and threats to supporters and staff. They will strengthen the provision of rescue activities, health insurances, life insurances and other jobs related to social security (e.g. use of warm cloths through clothing bank) of trekking tourism supporters through the TIMS
revenue. It will strengthen the full devotion and commitment of all supports in their jobs.

**Exploration, promotion and protection of trekking tourism**

TAAN WRA itself and in close association with all its members and other stakeholders (e.g. Nepal Tourism Board and other agencies) will continue exploration, promotion, conservation efforts of existing and new trekking routes, home-stay areas and rural tourism. The TAAN WRA members will promote Pokhara as hub and entry and exit points for trekking related superb adventure tourist destination through print (e.g. information brochures, leaflets, trekking maps), visual (e.g. documentary, and other soft copies) and web (internet) media in the global tourism market.

**Capacity building**

All members of TAAN WRA will regularly provide orientation on business competency, professional business leadership, and business ethics to all its member trekking agencies and relevant capacity building training and education on responsible and sustainable tourism, trekking tourism hospitality operations and environmental resources to service providing workers (e.g. trekking guides, group leaders, climbing Sherpas, Sirdars, climbing guides, trekking cooks, kitchen boys, etc.). This will make both trekking entrepreneurs and workers more competitive and efficient and assure service standards and customer satisfactions in the trekking tourism market of Pokhara. TAAN WRA members will also educate their guests and guides to respect the local culture and support in conservation of natural and cultural heritage sites and will educate local community to behave tourists with respect.

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**Don’ts**

**Unethical business practice**

All members of TAAN WRA will do their professional jobs without hampering others' business. These members will ignore the short time profit making self centered practices that could be generated through disseminating unreliable and wrong information to trekking tourists to generate quick businesses and benefits. This is important to ensure the prevention of weak work performances which lead to dissatisfaction and complaints of tourists.
Unhealthy competition on price
All members of TAAN WRA will stop and avoid the price-cutting-related-unhealthy competition(s) that can reduce the standard and quality of products and services to be offered to guests.

Immoral use of worker
All members of TAAN WRA will necessarily avoid the use of child labourers, old aged people, physically disabled people, untrained trekking guides in trekking jobs and women in risky and health threatening work during their service operations.

Irresponsible and unethical deeds
All members of TAAN WRA will ensure that the trekking guides and supporters they hire will not smoke, drink alcohol and do any other irresponsible and unethical deeds while they are on duty or with their guests. The member agencies will also guarantee that they properly educate their guides and guests before hand to follow proper itineraries (s) but do not follow the short cut way and do not disturb wild lives and natural vegetation. The member agencies will make certain that their trekking operations do not leave any litter wastage and garbage on trekking paths, camping sites, river banks, rivers, and villages on the way. They follow the minimum impact code laid down by conservation authority (e.g. National Trust for Nature Conservation) and do not use fuel wood in camping and discourage the camp fire activities wherever not allowed. These agencies will give emphasis to use gas or kerosene for cooking and keep camping sites clean for next group before they leave.

Political influence and orientation while on duty
In spite of political influence from and affiliations of labour unions with different political parties, all members of TAAN WRA will ensure that the supporters and trekking guides will not be involved in any political debate or community disputes while they are on duty with their guests at work place. However, this will not limit and compel to raise their voices and advocate for their rights within the existing labour law of Nepal when they are off duty.
9 Codes of conduct for Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents (NATTA), Regional Association Pokhara

Introduction

NATTA Pokhara was established as NATTA Pokhara Chapter in 2049 B.S. (1992 A.D.) which converted itself as NATTA Regional Association in 2061 B.S. (2004 A.D.). Formed with 97 members, NATTA Regional Association Pokhara has been working in coordination with NATTA central, Kathmandu. Its major objectives are to promote various scattered tourism spots of Nepal in general and Pokhara in particular. It has been implementing following activities from Pokhara as its work station to fulfil its objectives.

a) Organization of Pokhara city tour guide training
b) Organization of trainings to the drivers and co-drivers of tourist vehicles
c) Production of promotional materials
d) Training on ticketing system
e) Management of tourist spots
f) Organization of NATTA promotional tour

All the members of NATTA Pokhara agree and commit to following Dos (guidelines as desirable) and Don’ts (guidelines as not desirable) as tourism ethical operation Codes of conduct in the management and operation of our businesses for the healthy development of restaurant and bar related tourism activities in Pokhara.

Dos

Efficiency on quality service delivery

All members of NATTA would consider the efficiency of services as its prime business ethics in order to excel on services offered to tourists. All members will utilize the services of trained tour guides, office staff, coach drivers, ground handling staff and other personnel while operating travel and tour packages of
tourists in different tourist sites. These agencies will encourage the inclusion and participation of female workers in sales, ticketing and other front desk works.

**Proper utilization of modern information technology**

All members of NAATA will be familiar and will update themselves with modern communication and information technologies and apply these skills in the bookings, sales, reservations of travel and tour packages and their ground operation and management.

**Assurance of legal existence of tour and travel agencies**

NATTA will initiate by itself or in association with other institutions to ensure the tour and travel agencies operating in Pokhara are formally registered with the respective governmental authority before coming to operation.

**Establishment of a control mechanism centre at NATTA**

NATTA, in association with other tourism related organizations, will establish a control mechanism centre in future to control the occasionally seen illegal market management (e.g. other service vendors like a laundry service and tea stall hanging boards of ticket sellers for buses and airlines).

**Assurance of the standardization of tourist vehicles**

NATTA Pokhara will initiate its best to bring uniformity on the standardization of all vehicles operated by NATTA members for tourist services. It will monitor the standardization and the proper state of maintenance of the vehicles used for tourist services under one door system.

**Promotion of Pokhara at destination level**

All members of NATTA will promote Pokhara and its surrounding as a vibrant tourist venue for frequent fairs, festivals, sports, seminars, familiarization trips, and workshops in the world tourism market.

**Capacity building**

All members of NATTA Pokhara will regularly organize trainings on professional business leadership, business competency and business ethics to all its member tour and travel entrepreneurs and relevant capacity building trainings and education on responsible and sustainable tourism and hospitality operations to various service providing staff workers (e.g. ticketing staff, tour guides, etc.).
This will make both entrepreneur and workers more competitive and efficient and assure service standards and customer satisfactions in the travel and tourism market of Pokhara.

**Connection of transport services to new tourist destinations**
NATTA will actively involve itself in connecting new and upcoming tourist destinations by surface and air.

**Playing Role in categorizing tour and travel agencies of Nepal**
NATTA Pokhara itself and in association with other agencies (e.g. NATTA central) will take initiative in categorizing tour and travel agencies in two categories: (a) registered in Kathmandu and (b) registered in places other than Kathmandu. It will also lobby to categorize travel agencies based on the amount (lower and higher) of transactions.

### Don’ts

**Unethical business practice**
All members of NATTA will prevent and avoid the short time profit making self-centred practices that could be generated through disseminating unreliable and wrong information to guests to generate businesses. Such an irresponsible behaviour and trend towards service suppliers and guests generate guests’ dissatisfactions, create guest complaints and cause weak performances.

**Unhealthy competition on price**
All members of NATTA Pokhara will stop and avoid the price cutting related unhealthy competition that leads to the reduction of quality of products and services to be offered to guests. NATTA will encourage formulating quality based rational price of travel and tourism products as per their demands by tourists.

**Use of vehicles for customers’ service**
All members of NATTA will avoid the use of older vehicles (to be defined based on the manufacture types) by using green sticker in operation and management of tourist services that can generate negative impression on service delivery and negative image of destination. This practice is important not only for ensuring
customers’ safety, comfort and preventing environmental degradation (e.g. air pollution and green house gas emission) but also offering services with reliability and punctuality to tourists. The member agencies will also take care of using vehicles as per the road capacity of Pokhara.

**Immoral use of worker**

All members of NATTA will necessarily avoid the use of child labourers and untrained manpower (staff) in their operations and service provisions.

**Disturbance of tourist services through strikes**

All members of NATTA and their workers should avoid the trend of supporting as well as participating in closure and strikes especially in tourism zone(s) while on job (duty) to demonstrate any sort of their professional discontent(s) and dissatisfaction(s).
Introduction

REBAN Pokhara is a professional association of 72 restaurant and bar entrepreneurs established in Kartik 2052 B.S (October 1985 A.D.). It has following core objectives in the field of food, beverage and catering.

a) To protect the legal and professional rights of restaurant and bar entrepreneurs

b) To facilitate and strengthen inter-cooperation, understanding, and cordial environment among members of REBAN Pokhara

c) To upgrade the standard and quality of services of members organizations by facilitating healthy competition and professional ethics among member organizations

d) To enhance the image of Pokhara as a destination of food tourism by indentifying responsible and sustainable restaurant and bar professionalism

REBAN Pokhara has been actively involved in achieving above objectives through various promotional activities like organizations of Pokhara Street Festival, Fagu Purnima Festival, World Tourism Day Street Festival, cleaning campaign, etc.

All the members of REBAN Pokhara agree and commit to following Do’s (guidelines as desirable) and Don’ts (guidelines as not desirable) as tourism ethical operation Codes of conduct in the management and operation of our businesses for the healthy development of restaurant and bar related tourism activities in Pokhara.
Dos

Use of raw materials
All members of REBAN Pokhara will give the highest emphasis to use consumable local resources like vegetables, dairy products and fruits as inputs in producing different items of food and beverage in order to create and enhance local supply linkage, prevent leakage and benefit the local suppliers.

Pricing
All members of REBAN pokhara will manage the uniformity and consistency on price for the similar standard of menu, quality of food and services which will serve all kinds of tourists on uniform basis.

Hygiene and sanitation
All members of REBAN Pokhara should ensure the highest level of hygiene and sanitation at kitchen, dining hall and bar of restaurant and bars.

Capacity building of service providers
All members of REBAN Pokhara will regularly conduct the training on hospitality, culinary, cooking, baking and serving skills to excel in service standards and customer satisfaction.

Establishment of food health control mechanism centre
REBAN will initiate for the establishment of food health control mechanism centre in future to control the occasionally seen deterioration of the food health and enhance its hygiene and quality in the long run. Such a centre will be rewarding for research and finding of local problems (e.g. diarrhoea) of tourists in Pokhara.

Promotion of destination through food festival
All members of REBAN will work on promoting Pokhara through regular organizations of food festivals with local traditional and cultural activities.

Legalization of existence and operation
REBAN will initiate its best to ensure that the restaurant and bars operating in Pokhara are formally registered in the concerned government authority before coming to the operation.
Don’ts

Unhealthy competition on price
All members of REBAN Pokhara will stop and avoid the price cutting related unhealthy competition (as generated through offering commissions to guides and other reasons) that reduces quality of food and services to be offered to guests.

Waste disposal
No members of REBAN Pokhara will deposit wastage and dirty water in the open drainage or road side nearby the restaurant in order to stop the unhygienic trend and behaviour.

Kitchen set up
All members will avoid the set up of kitchens (food production centre) which are lack air passing channel and is unhygienic. Kitchens should be open and hygienic to prepare the healthy food stuffs.

Immoral use and exploitation of worker
All members of REBAN Pokhara will strictly avoid the use of child labour, women, old aged and physically disabled people for risky and unsafe work in restaurant and bars.

Strikes
All members of REBAN Pokhara and their workers should avoid the trend of calling strikes especially in tourist zone.
Introduction

TAP was established in \textit{Bhadra 2040 B.S.} (August, 1983 A.D.) to run taxi vehicles in the tourist city of Pokhara with their proper management. It has been working with the aim of ensuring the professional rights and authorities of taxi entrepreneurs, offering properly managed taxi services to taxi transport service users (tourists and other travellers) and supporting the maintenance of Pokhara as a neat, clean and healthy city from tourists’ travel perspective. There is a total of 4500 taxis of various categories like Toyota, Maruti, Alto, Santro, etc. brands and 54 micro buses associated with TAP which are running in greater Pokhara and connecting Pokhara with surrounding districts like Baglung, Syangja, Tanahu, Palpa, etc. TAP has been involved in various philanthropic and corporate social responsibility related affairs like blood donation, training and awareness to the drivers on safety, security and comforts of taxi service users.

All the members of TAP agree and commit to following Dos (guidelines as desirable) and Don’ts (guidelines as not desirable) as tourism ethical operation Codes of conduct in the management and operation of our businesses for the healthy development of taxi and micro bus -related tourism activities in Pokhara.

Dos

Excellence of service

TAP will provide reliable and punctual taxi service and maintain the minimum standard of services to taxi and micro bus users.
Capacity building
TAP will enhance the capacity of both taxi entrepreneurs and taxi drivers and office staff by organizing various capacity building activities in cooperation with Nepal Tourism Board and other State agencies. The capacity building aimed for taxi entrepreneurs will focus on enhancing their marketing and business skills where as such programs aimed for drivers will have focus on communication and hospitality skills, interpersonal skills, knowledge on tourism products of Pokhara, and latest traffic rules and regulation.

Standard of vehicle
TAP will fix the minimum standard of taxi and micro buses through proper maintenance to mitigate pollution raised by taxi and micro buses a clean and green city. TAP will also start the installation of signage as “TAXI ट्याक्सी व्यवसायी समितिबाट संचालित” on all member taxis for the convenience of taxi service users.

Standard of service and fare
TAP will manage standard service with a fixed rate of fare for different routes within Pokhara city and beyond.

Proper record keeping
TAP will start keeping records of taxi drivers employed by taxi owners. This record will clearly reveal who is employed by who with the proper identity cards for taxi drivers.

Establishment of “Taxi Replacement Fund”
TAP will establish “taxi replacement fund” to support all member taxi entrepreneurs who voluntarily agree to replace old model of taxi and micro buses with new one. However, this will be applicable after the approval from TAP which will determine about the sufficiency of existing number of vehicles to offer sufficient services as per demand.

Don’ts

Unhealthy competition on price
All members of TAP will avoid the trend of unhealthy competition orientated towards price cutting.
**Remove outdated vehicle**
All members of TAP will avoid the use of older vehicles (to be defined based on the manufacturers types) in operation and management of taxi and micro service user. This is particularly important for ensuring customers’ safety, comfort and reducing environmental pollution.

**Parking management and vehicle speed**
TAP members will not park the vehicles either sides of the road anywhere which are prohibited by department of road management and traffic police and will control the speed of vehicle at confident level to avoid possible accidents.

**Hassle or misbehavior with guests**
All members of TAP will discourage and prohibit any kind of hassle or mis behaviour to traveller. They will not provide fake information to travellers.
12 Codes of conduct for Pokhara Bus Entrepreneurs' Association (PBEA)

Introduction

PBEA is a private organization of the entrepreneurs concerned with the shuttle services provided by public transport plying within the Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan and its neighbouring VDCs. It started the service in 2032 B.S. (1976 A.D.) and was formally registered in the District Administration Office Kaski in 2049 B.S. (1992 A.D.) with the slogan to keep the tourist destination Pokhara a clean, peaceful and naturally beautiful city. With 4 vehicles in the beginning, its number at present has reached 251 and is divided into three categories. It has been providing easy, cheap, safe and comfortable services to the general public bearing in mind the truth that the city is not limited to the city dwellers only but also to the inland and foreign visitors as well. The Association is always keen on keeping itself updated and it sets programs according to the need and desire of the public. The publicly liked feature of the association is about keeping public interest on top priority this has listed it among the well managed and service oriented public transport entrepreneurs’ organizations of the nation.

Major objectives of the association.

a) To unite the entrepreneurs associated with this association under the same umbrella and to develop it as a self governed and organized institution.

b) To encourage catering standard service to the public with service motive and to discourage monopoly and self centered practices.

c) To provide reliable service not only around Pokhara Valley but to and from neighboring VDCs.

d) To support for developing pollution-free urban environment by introducing time relevant and technically advanced vehicles in its service.
e) To work together with local administration and people in construction and extension of rural transportation.

f) To join hands with all social organizations for social works and to fulfill the corporate social responsibility.

The association is committed to making transport sector a respectful profession. Providing regular trainings and mass counselling to the entrepreneurs, workers and office staff regarding job description, professional ethics, customer friendly behaviour, personal traits, speed control; educating them about traffic signs and signals; and conducting time to time interaction programs with the general public are some of the annual schedules of the association. Besides these, PBEA is equally involved in various social activities keeping in mind the corporate social responsibility as one of its important obligations.

Dos

Capacity Building

To promote the business in the competitive market with hospitality service motive, continuation will be given to capacity building and interpersonal skill trainings to all associated entrepreneurs, workers and office staff. Similarly, information will be provided about tourism, local products and traffic system. Major feedback for such trainings will be obtained from the interaction programs with the local people, concerned authorities, political figures, students, media and social organizations and activists.

Reliable Information and service

It will provide accurate information about the current service assurance with guarantee in terms of dependability, safety, comfort and easy accessibility to inland and foreign passengers.

Vehicle standard

‘Walk ahead with the pace of time and keep on strictly implementing the updated policy for the needful change in the service and to maintain standard of the vehicle in use’ will be the thrust of PBEA. To look better and serve better, it has imposed colour uniformity, size uniformity and compulsory substituting policy to its members. Under substituting strategy, old vehicles are compulsorily replaced by new and advanced ones in each 7 to 10 years term.
Standard fare and service
PBEA is strict in following the scientific fare approved by the concerned ministry or department. Our motto will be customers’ satisfaction in reliable fare. Pokhara being the tourist city, PBEA is committed to provide cheap and comfortable service functioning till late night to tourists and city dwellers.

Control on possible accidents
The association has been providing trainings to drivers and helpers of the vehicles to minimize road accidents. It is making bus stoppages, waiting stalls, zebra crossings and donating road dividers, speed control radar guns and traffic bicycles to concerned offices for the traffic management of the valley. It will continue funding for Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) installation and management. Regular inspection by the organization in its routes to minimize over speed and mis-behaviour of the staff will find priority in the coming years too.

Service on route wise
Accepting the truth that all passengers are not able to read names of places, Pokhara Bus will ply with route numbers making passengers easy to understand about destination in service bus.

Use of stoppage
To minimise the possible accident as well as for easy availability of the route buses, Pokhara Bus has fixed stoppages for picking and dropping passengers. It will continue to instruct the buses to stop only at designated points.

Don’ts

Unhealthy competition
Unhealthy competition among operating vehicles will be discouraged especially in the city and tourist areas. Time keeping of arrival and departure of each vehicle in major stations will be activated. Using pressure horns and producing unusual sound by the bus staff at working place will be discouraged.
Outdated vehicles
Transformation in service as per the demand will be followed. It will continue substituting policy and work on replacing vehicles dated over 7 to 10 years duration with new, spacious and comfortable ones.

Park anywhere
Parking problem is a burning issue of Pokhara city. This organization has strictly instructed each vehicle not to stop or park at unauthorized places. The association has spotted stoppages in all routes and has constructed comfortable waiting rooms. Inspection team will work on road to watch such malpractices and punishes them by imposing fine to those who disqualify.

Hassling or misbehaving with passengers
The association shows special concern to the capacity of the vehicle to discourage excess passengers in a bus. Similarly, it will discourage hassling or misconduct with the passengers. PBEA will not mislead people by providing fake information about their service and data.
13 Codes of conduct for Trekking Equipment Shops’ Association, Pokhara

Introduction
Trekking Equipment Shops’ Association (TESA) is an organization of 59 member entrepreneurs who are involved in manufacturing, selling, distributing and managing quality equipments and goods for all kinds of tourists, trekkers, mountaineers and other general travellers.

TESA has been in existence since 2054 B.S. (1998 A.D.) in the tourism market of Pokhara. There are following core objectives of this association.

a.) To create favourable environment in order to ensure the professional rights of the TESA members.
b.) To conduct different social activities for the development and promotion of tourism in Pokhara.
c.) To pay special attention for the quality goods & equipments to the tourists.

The dedication of TESA in offering quality of goods and equipments has supported for the safety measures of the guests especially in trekking and mountaineering sectors. As a collective endeavour, all the members of TESA agree and commit to following Dos (guidelines as desirable) and Don’ts (guidelines as not desirable) as tourism ethical operation Codes of conduct in the management and operation of their businesses. Such tourism ethics are believed to ensure tourists’ satisfaction and to be a roadmap for the image building and branding of Pokhara as a sustainable and responsible tourist destination.

Dos

Branding/Trade Mark
All members will give local brand name or trade mark in their products and thus ensure to maintain the quality of trekking equipments and clothes in Pokhara.
Pricing the goods
All members will ensure the fixed price of the renting charge of trekking and travelling equipments which are rented to travellers and trekkers. All members will maintain a standard and fair price rate by displaying price tags on all saleable trekking and travelling goods that will support customers’ satisfaction through consistency, uniformity and reliability on pricing.

Capacity building
To enhance the business in international competitive market, TESA will organize and impart various capacity building related trainings, knowledge and skills to its member entrepreneurs, managers and sales executives as a continuing process. At the same time, it will also organize skill-based training to the labourers in producing different qualities of trekking equipments and other products.

Promotion of destinations
All members will promote different natural and cultural heritage sites, historical places, religious and spiritual values of Nepal in general and Pokhara and Annapurna region in particular by introducing and exposing them with the brand names (e.g. Annapurna, Rara, Everest, Fewa, etc.) on different equipments, clothes and materials.

Don’ts

Copying and duplication of international trade mark
The practice of giving international trademark in local products seems very common. It is not a legal practice nor does it look fair and sound business culture. TESA members will be inclined towards gradually avoiding the existing practices of giving international trademark names in local products.

Pricing the products
All members of TESA will discourage the practices of differentiating and discriminating in prices of a good available at different shops with the same size, volume and standard of quality. Such an unfair nature of practice will be gradually removed.

Unfair competition
All members of TESA will intentionally discourage the unfair competition to avoid price cutting related unhealthy practices that reduce the quality of the available products to be offered to guests.
14. Codes of conduct for Embroidery and Garment Association (EGA), Pokhara

Introduction

EGA is a professional association of 75 tourism entrepreneurs who are engaged in production of traditional dresses (e.g. T-shirt, jacket) and gifts (e.g. bags) which are both made and imported by Nepalese cottage industries. Such dresses and gifts depict image/picture popular tourist destinations of Nepal, various wild animals, informative signs of trekking trails, beautiful mountain ranges, lakes, Himalayas, etc. through the medium of embroidery and are sold and distributed to tourists.

EGA was established in 2061 B.S. (2004 A.D.) which has following specific objectives:

a) To create a favorable environment for the professional rights and betterments of the members of EGA
b) To prioritize and motivate the production of clothes which are produced by Nepalese cottage industries
c) To contribute for the overall development of tourism in Pokhara
d) To insist the associated members of EGA to be responsible and sustainable tourism practitioners

This association has fixed the wage rate of workers involved in embroidery and garments. This has facilitated to enhance the professional image and quality of this association through building coordinal relationships between EGA member embroidery and garment enterprises and workers employed therein. This association annually awards the best embroidery shop whose decoration is excellent among similar competitors in the tourism market of Pokhara. Realizing the ethics of corporate social responsibility, EGA has been engaged in various social responsibility related activities like blood donations, cleaning of tourist spots, and offering food and conducting tours in favour of senior citizens to various religious sites.
All the members of EGA agree and commit to following Dos (guidelines as desirable) and Don’ts (guidelines as not desirable) as tourism ethical operation Codes of conduct in the management and operation of their businesses and operation. Such tourism ethics is considered as a roadmap for the positive image building and branding of Pokhara as a sustainable and responsible tourist destination.

**Dos**

**Pricing**
All EGA members should maintain a standard and fair price rate by displaying price tags on all saleable dresses and goods that will create customers’ satisfaction through consistency, uniformity and reliability on pricing.

**Capacity building**
As an integral part and continuous process of maintaining and enhancing quality output, EGA will organize and impart various capacity building related trainings, knowledge and skills to its member entrepreneurs, managers and sales executives. At the same time, it will also organize skill-based trainings to the employees involved in tailoring and stitching in producing different qualities of trekking equipments and other products.

**Promotion**
All members will produce, sale and distribute embroidery and garment related goods and dresses in local and international tourism markets which reflect and promote identities (e.g. trekking, rafting, jungle safari, paragliding, etc.) and pride (e.g. popular tourist destinations) of Nepal.

**Don’ts**

**Unfair business practice**
All members of EGA will be inclined towards gradually avoiding the existing practices of giving international trademark names to local products which, though commonly seen, is not a sound and fair business practice.
Unhealthy competition on price
All members of EGA will discourage and avoid the price cutting related unhealthy competition as it compels to reduce the quality of the available products to be offered to guests. All members of EGA will discourage the practices of differentiating and discriminating on prices of the same good available at different shops with the same size, volume and standard of quality. Such a practice is not fair for different clients who are compelled to buy the same quality of product with different prices.
15. Codes of conduct for Nepal Air Sports Association

Introduction

Nepal Air Sports Association (NAA) was established in 2059 B.S. (2002 A.D.) with the objective of institutional development of air sports by uniting common interests of all air sports entrepreneurs, pilots and sportsmen involved in air sports in Nepal. It is inspired for the overall development of tourism in Nepal through the rapid development of air sports activities in Nepal. NAA is committed to achieving the following objectives within the existing legal frame work (rules and regulations) and policy related directions of Nepal Government.

a. To contribute to the development of tourism in Nepal by protecting professional rights and benefits of air sports entrepreneurs.

b. To create favourable environment for the promotion of safe, reliable, easily available and competent air sports activities and to identify challenges pertaining to the sustainable development of air sports through proper study and research

c. To maintain a cordial environment and mutual understanding and to coordinate the member organizations for the effective development of their activities.

d. To provide constructive suggestions to respective departments/agencies of government for the formulation and deregulation of existing acts, laws, policies and regulations of air sports

All the members of NAA unanimously agree and are committed to following Dos (guidelines as desirable) and Don’ts (guidelines as not desirable) as codes of conduct in the management and operation of their businesses, operation and management for the healthy development of air sports related tourism activities in Pokhara and Nepal.
Dos

Consistency on service and fair pricing
All members of NAA will maintain uniformity on the pricing based on the flying duration of air sports services for mutual benefits of all operators. All operators will also publicly display their standard pricing.

Capacity building
All members of NAA will regularly organize trainings on professional business leadership, business competency and business ethics to all its member air sports operators/entrepreneurs and relevant capacity building training and education on responsible and sustainable tourism and hospitality operations to staff workers (e.g. sales booking staff, paragliding pilots, operation manpower, etc.). This will make both entrepreneur and workers more competitive and efficient and will ensure service standards and customer satisfaction in the field of air sports.

Promotion
All members of NAA will institutionalize the promotion of paragliding and other aerial sports by organizing various national and international competitions and by conducting worldwide media campaigns. It will also regularly organize various national and international conferences and workshops to promote the aerial sports activities in Nepal.

Quality and reliability in service
All members of NAA will properly counsel and inform their clients about taking safety measures, assure the standard of comfort and reliable service while following the prescribed rules and regulations of air aviation.

Don’ts

Unethical business practice
All members of NAA will prevent and avoid the short time profit making self centred practices that could be generated through disseminating unreliable and wrong information to guests to generate businesses. Such an irresponsible behaviour and attitude towards guests and other suppliers of NAA create suppliers’ dissatisfaction and guests’ complaints.

Unhealthy competition on price
All members of NAA Pokhara will stop and avoid the price cutting related unhealthy competition that reduces quality of products and services to be offered to guests.
16. Codes of conduct for media sector, Pokhara, Kaski

Introduction
Pokhara, situated in Western Nepal, is the second most important tourist destination after Kathmandu and has also remained the head quarter of Western Development Region of Nepal. It is blessed with the backdrop of one of the most dramatic sceneries in the world. If Kathmandu is the cultural hub of Nepal, Pokhara positions itself as the centre of adventure. Being one of the major towns of the country, it has been also developed as the centre of health, education, sports, businesses and media sectors as well.

The media sector and journalists of Pokhara are associated and united with each other through Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), Kaski District Chapter. FNJ Kaski District Chapter which consists of more than 260 journalists as its members was established in 2034 B.S. (1977 A.D.) as a branch of the central committee of FNJ.

The major objective of FNJ, Kaski is to protect professional rights and authorities of free press while developing institutionalism and building professionalism of all journalists in Kaski. In order to provide incentive to the journalists for the sustainability in their profession in Kaski, FNJ Kaski Chapter annually rewards its members by different prizes. It has established welfare fund and has planned for life insurance of the members. This Chapter has been active in organizing several trainings, seminars and workshops for the capacity building of the members and professional journalism in Pokhara. All media houses united under FNJ, Kaski act as valuable media of important news of tourism sector and also as the bridges with various national and international media.

All media houses assembled under FNJ Kaski agree and are committed to following Dos (guidelines as desirable) and Don’ts (guidelines as not desirable) as Codes of conduct in the media behaviours (news collections, editing, disseminating, etc.) for the sustainable development and promotion of tourism activities in Pokhara.
Dos

Promotion of tourism products and development of innovative models
All media houses will promote and publicize both existing and new tourism products, destinations, and will design innovative model(s) of tourism development which are inclusive, differential, participatory and distinctive (e.g. partnership actions between tourism practitioners and local communities) applications.

Higher priority to news on responsible tourism products
All media houses will give higher priority to responsible and sustainable tourism products in their media coverage, report, communication and dissemination of news on tourism sector of Pokhara.

Awareness and sensitization to hosts and guests
All media houses will act in such a way that they enhance awareness and motivation and sensitize hosts’ (e.g. tourism entrepreneurs and service providing workers) consciousness, interests and experiences in strengthening responsible tourism practices, services and experiences while disseminating tourism related news.

Support tourists on their right to information and correct decisions
All media houses are an important source of travel and security related information for tourists in their various stages (e.g. destination choice stage, in-between stage, on-site stage and also pre-next trip stage). The media will report in such a way that it directly and indirectly educate tourists and visitors in their various phases of travel decisions and during travel experience about Nepal.

Up-scaling of knowledge and awareness of local civil society on value of tourism
All media houses will engage professionally in such a way that they enhance sustainable local development by up-scaling the knowledge and awareness to the local civil society towards the value and broader benefits of tourism with its multi-directional (forward and backward) linkages. This in turn would be contributory for sustainable development of local level tourism in Pokhara.
Responsible reporting on sensitive news

The negative perception and drastic measures of tourists can be avoided if tourists (not only potential tourists but also would-be travellers who have already booked their holidays, tourists experiencing their holidays on-site, and those returning from their recent trips) become exposed to accurate, balanced, comprehensive, up-to-date, interpretative, and evaluative information on the travel and security information and the ways it changes over time and space. It needs proper communication management to limit and control the unrealistic information and to balance the negative information conveyed through the media before and during the crisis and throughout the crisis recovery phase. In this context, all media houses will adopt accuracy, balance, neutrality and credibility by following the codes of conduct of Nepal Press Council and Federation of Nepalese Journalists, Kaski District Chapter. They will exercise independent critical judgment while reporting any news on tourist destinations, tourist products, consumers’ services, private industry (e.g. private tourism enterprises, suppliers, management, employees) and public sector of tourism which are sensitive or negative.

Highlight of successful stories

All media houses will bring the news of good, successful, ‘hot spot’ stories coincided with good activities and behaviors on corporate social responsibility and tourism ethical operation codes of conduct at tourist destination level in Pokhara and around to public attention this can inspire tourism here to be more sustainable, gentle and responsible and which can even benefit non tourism sector as a whole.

Exercise of caution

It is the portrayal of political conflict or instability that becomes uppermost cause in the formulation of tourists’ negative destination image, risk perceptions and destination choice behaviors. All media houses and reporters will exercise a vigilance in covering and selling the ‘hot spot’ stories (News of events and incidents) of tourist destinations caught with political conflicts, bringing it to the notice of tourists and playing influential roles in shaping tourists’ opinion, perception, awareness, and attitudes towards destination image.
Don’ts

Sensitive news about destination image
All media houses will take added responsibility and sensitivity in such a way that they avoid deteriorating destination image of Pokhara as a whole and false expectations of existing and potential tourists, tourism enterprises, tourism entrepreneurs, tourism managers, tourist suppliers, and the local civil society (non tourism sector) in Pokhara.

Exaggeration of events against sustainability
All media houses will avoid media hype (exaggeration) on any event which creates adverse effect in the promotion of the sustainability of tourist products and services and tourist destination of Pokhara as whole.

Avoid media hype of legally and socially unacceptable news
All media will be cautious enough to avoid the hype of any legally and socially unacceptable news and activities (e.g. prostitutions, child abuse, abolition of human rights, drugs abuses, use and carrying of narcotics, etc.) in both the society of Pokhara and Nepalese society at large in order to discourage any trend in these issues.
17. Codes of conduct for Tourism Workers’ Unions

All the members of Union of Trekking-Travels-Rafting and Airlines Workers’ Nepal (UNITRAV), Western Regional Committee; All Nepal Tourism Workers Union–Kaski (ANTWU-Western Regional Committee) and All Nepal Hotel, Casino and Restaurant Workers Union-Kaski (ANHCRWU-Kaski) untidily agree and are committed to following Dos (guidelines as desirable) and Don’ts (guidelines as not desirable) as tourism ethical operation Codes of conduct in their work, operation and management. They consider tourism ethics as a roadmap for positive image building and branding of Pokhara as a sustainable and responsible tourist destination.

Dos

Service excellence
All laborers and workers under UNITRAV-Western Regional Committee, ANTWU-Western Regional Committee and ANHCRWU-Kaski are committed to excel in services offered to tourists and trekkers. These workers will possess valid work licenses and identity cards on jobs and will update themselves (e.g. to be informed and to be knowledgeable about various tourism products of the Pokhara Valley and the surrounding) with required knowledge and skills to be able to explain, guide and offer services to all kinds of service users (visitors, tourists, etc.) in respective fields, contexts, and contents of services.

Safety and security of tourists
All laborers and workers will properly take care of guests (tourists) and guarantee their full safety, security, comfort and satisfaction.

Capacity building
UNITRAV-Western Regional Committee, ANTWU-Western Regional Committee and ANHCRWU-Kaski will organize various knowledge, skill and service related training programs to enhance the service capacity of laborers and workers and
make them more responsible towards their guests in order to upgrade service standard and guests’ satisfaction. The process of capacity building will include fresh orientation to the newly identified tourist destinations (products) as well as refresher courses on existing tourism destinations (products).

**Job security**

UNITRAV-Western Regional Committee, ANTWU-Western Regional Committee and ANHRWU-Kaski will work in such a way that they support in minimizing the risk factor in the instability of jobs and in strengthening the provision of life insurance and other jobs related to social security of tourism workers and laborers. This is especially important for the full devotion and commitment of all laborers and workers in their jobs.

### Don’ts

**Unethical deeds**

No labourer or worker will drink alcohol or smoke or use earphone while on duty or with their guests so that they can perform to the their level best and can prevent guests’ dissatisfaction, complaint and other unexpected weak job performances.

**Unfriendly attitude among workers and co-workers**

In spite of the adoption of different philosophies based on the affiliation with different mother parties by the laborers and workers of various unions, laborers and workers affiliated with UNITRAV-Western Regional Committee, ANTWU-Western Regional Committee and ANHRWU-Kaski should not consider each other as rivalry and should maintain friendly and cordial relation among themselves.

**Political influence and orientation while on duty**

In spite of political influence of and affiliations with labour unions (laborers) with different political parties, the labourers and workers will not involve in any political debate or community disputes by taking side and against while they are on duty with certain responsibility on their shoulders or if they are with their guests at work space. However, this will not limit and compel to raise their voices and advocate for their rights by being within the exiting labour law of Nepal.
18. Codes of conduct for General Stakeholders\(^2\) of Tourism in Pokhara

Introduction

Tourism is a multifaceted composite product which is operational with the amalgam of various tourist and non tourist local actors. Where there are active roles of direct and formal actors, there are also indirect and informal roles and activities played by various indirect and informal actors in partial association with active tourism actors. The sustainable and responsible destination image of a tourist product can be made possible only by the joint effort and partnership actions between both of these actors. This dynamism of tourism necessitates some responsibility also for non tourism actors whose realization, initiations, sensitization and follow up could be added benefits for a tourist destination in building responsible and sustainable tourist destination image. In this context, the paragraphs below are prepared as codes of conduct for general stakeholders/actors in Pokhara, who appear as integral parts of tourism and can be equally valuable indirect actors in the tourist destination system. These conducts are, however, equally applicable for direct and active tourist actors who can and should cooperate with indirect tourist actors as well as non-tourist actors in facilitating the proper application of these CoCs at destination level in Pokhara.

All stakeholders (direct and indirect actors and local communities and civil society in Pokhara) agree and are committed to following Do’s (guidelines as desirable) and Don’ts (guidelines as not desirable) as tourism ethical operation codes of conduct for the healthy development of tourism in Pokhara by which both tourist and non-tourist sectors can benefit from each other in a cohesive, dependent and sustainable manner.

\(^2\) These stakeholders include local administration, government security agencies, pokhara sub-metropolitan city, civil society, general tourism professionals, NGOs, CBOs, educational institutes, and other non tourist actors and the host communities in Pokhara.
Dos

Conservation of natural and cultural tourist heritages
The natural (e.g. lakes, mountains, etc.) and cultural heritage (e.g. monuments, shrines, museums, religious buildings, archaeological and historical sites etc.) are tourism resources which belong to the common heritage of mankind; all general actors and communities of Pokhara in whose territories they are situated have both rights and obligations to them. All general actors in Pokhara will individually, separately and collectively make efforts to conserve natural heritage which are important attractions for the existence and sustainable operation of tourism.

Integration of tourism development with conservation
All general actors will jointly make efforts to develop and promote the natural and cultural heritages of Pokhara as its prime tourist products. They will always try to integrate tourism development with conservation.

Use of heritages and contribution for their enhancement
All general actors in Pokhara should, at least in part, use the financial resources derived from visits of tourist for the maintenance and reconstruction of cultural and natural sites and monuments to upkeep, safeguard, strengthen and beautify these heritages.

Promotion of less resource consumptive nature of tourism
All actors will be careful enough to access the carrying capacity of Pokhara in terms of the pressure on increased water needs and waste disposal due to the high flow of tourists particularly those resulting from school holidays and school study visits. All general actors in Pokhara will give priority and encouragement to the form of tourism development which are conducive to saving rare and precious resources, in particular water and energy, as well as avoiding waste production and disposal. They should insist in the promotion of less resource consumptive nature of tourism to national, regional and local public authorities.

Promotion of tourism with preservation of local culture
All general actors will involve tourists in different folk cultural ceremonies (e.g. Lakhe nach, Bhairav nach, Bagh Jatra, Balun, Bhajans, Tohante, etc.). They will conduct tourism activities in harmony with the attributes, traditions, practices and customs of Pokhara and in respect with the law of Nepal. They will plan
tourist activities in such a way that the cultural products, traditions and folklores survive and flourish rather than deteriorate and become standardized.

**Professional ethics on price and value of product**

All general actors will be ethical enough to be involved in cooperation, collaboration, and coordination rather than only competition for profit making by undercutting the price and reducing the quality of their services.

**Acquaintance with respect to tourists**

The host communities in association with local tourism professionals should acquaint themselves with and respect tourists who visit them for pilgrimage, health, education, cultural and linguistic exchanges, etc. and to learn the indigenous lifestyles, tastes and expectations. All general actors of Pokhara should orient, generate awareness and capacitate themselves with appropriate education and training so as to be able to offer hospitable welcome to tourists.

**Dissemination of accurate information to tourists**

All general actors have an obligation to provide tourists with honest information about products and destinations and about the conditions of travel, hospitality and accommodation. The local government authority will consider the gravity of the situation which is likely to be encountered by tourists and will disseminate information about any kind of difficulty arising from both natural and man-made causes.

**Physical safety and security of tourists**

The local administration (including tourist police) in association with government security agency will provide protection to tourists and their belongings. The local government will inform tourists of any danger especially in the state of crisis caused by manmade or natural reasons. The local administration should facilitate the introduction of special means of information, prevention, security, insurance and assistance as per the needs of tourists. It would severely condemn any attacks, assaults, kidnappings or threats against tourists or workers in the tourism industry; as well as the deliberate destruction of tourism facilities or of elements of cultural or natural heritage. Both local administration and security agency will punish the culprits in accordance with the national law of Nepal.

**Uninterrupted movements of tourists**

All general actors of Pokhara will give the highest importance to the freedom and liberty right to travel (as per article 13 of the Universal Declaration of
Human Rights 1948), uninterrupted movements, rest, relaxation, leisure, sports, access to culture and nature, practice of religions, food safety and individual and collective fulfilment of tourists without any discrimination in whatever the ways (directly and indirectly) possible.

**Protection of tourists in terms of their consumer rights**

The local administration (public authority) in Pokhara in association with concerned professionals and their associations must ensure that the necessary mechanisms are in place for the repatriation of tourists even in the state of bankruptcy of the enterprises that organized their travel in Pokhara.

**Encouragement and facilitation to specialized category of tourists**

All general actors would encourage, facilitate and promote domestic tourists and all other tourists who are in family or who are youth, students and senior (old aged) citizens or with disabilities (physically and mental retarded) for their safety and comfort while travelling in Pokhara.

**Prevention against default to tourists**

All general stakeholders and tourism professionals should ensure that the contractual clauses proposed to their customers are readily understandable like the nature, price and quality of the services they commit themselves to provide and the financial compensation payable by them in the event of a unilateral breach of contract on their part.

**Facilitations to tourists**

All general stakeholders will give tourists easy access to all available forms of communication (internal or external); the latter should also have prompt and easy access to local administration, legal and health services; they should be free to contact the consular representatives of their countries of origin in compliance with the diplomatic conventions in force. Travellers should have access to allowance of convertible currencies needed for their travels.

**Prioritization to domestic tourists and tourism**

All general actors will give equal importance to both domestic as well as international tourists as guests since domestic tourists are a base to sustain the tourist industry.
Prioritization of equality and individual rights to benefit locals
All general stakeholders should respect the equality to men and women; they should promote human rights and, more particularly, the individual rights of the most vulnerable groups, notably children, the elderly, the handicapped, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. The stakeholders should approach in such a way that they associate local population with tourism activities with priorities and share equitably in the economic, social and cultural benefits they generate, and particularly in the creation of direct and indirect jobs resulting from them.

Emphasize tourism related education and research
Both public and private educational institutions in Pokhara should give priority to introduce and include tourism in the curricula of lower and higher levels. Such curricula should give emphasis to the value of tourist exchanges, partnership actions between researchers and tourism practitioners, peaceful travels, potential of peace through tourism, responsible and sustainable tourism, and the economic, social and cultural benefits of tourism.

Maximization of the intake of organic agro products
All stakeholders should do their best to maximize the use of organic vegetables and other agro products while offering such consumable tourist products to tourists. The District Agriculture Development Office of Kaski will particularly play constructive role in this endeavour.

Implementation of tourism ethical operation codes of conduct for tourism
The public and private actors in tourism operation, management and development should cooperate in the implementation of the tourism operation codes of conduct for tourism in Pokhara. For this, the local administration and concerned government authority in association with CoC implementation committee will monitor and supervise their respective sectors for the implementation of this ethical code.

Role of codes of conduct implementation committee in case of unforeseen dispute
All general stakeholders should demonstrate their intention to settle any dispute concerning the application or interpretation of the tourism operation codes of conduct for Pokhara for conciliation and for the impartial implementation of public-private committee in case of any unforeseen dispute.
Don’ts

Disturbance of tourist services through closures and strikes
All general actors of Pokhara will avoid both participation in and giving support to closures and strikes especially in tourism zone(s) to show any kind of discontent(s) and dissatisfaction(s) in social setting.

Unfriendly dealing and hassle to tourists
All general actors of Pokhara will avoid any behaviour and dealing which seem unfriendly to tourists. They will not hassle guests in the process of updating their documentations and of providing different services related to travel and tourism. This is particularly important for ensuring customers’ safety, comfort and for reducing environmental pollution.

Mis behavior with guests
All general members will discourage and prohibit any kind of hassle or misbehaviour to travelers. They will not provide fake information to travelers that cause travelers discomfort and complaints.

Production of wastage
The increasing tourist arrivals have also increasingly created various forms of solid and liquid wastages in Pokhara. All general actors of Pokhara will not create such wastages or be sensitive in creating lesser wastage. Pokhara sub-metropolitan City will actively be involved in proper cleaning and sanitation of Pokhara sub-metropolitan city and in managing the wastage properly.

Avoidance of exploitation of workers
All general actors of Pokhara energetically combat and assist each other in avoiding the exploitation of human beings like child laborers, senior citizens and women for risky work, sexual harassment and drug abuse. The local security agency will cooperate in these matters.

Unnecessary hassle by security agency
The concerned government security agency will not raid the guest or terrify them without clear prior evidence of mistake found by the security agencies. The security personnel will try their best to minimize the exposition of the heavy security equipments on front of tourists in Pokhara.

Encroachment of public places
No general actor will involve himself/herself in the encroachment of public places and heritage sites.
19. Codes of conduct for Tourists

Tourists are the major actors of tourism. They are like the lifeblood of tourism. Their roles and behaviors are important for any tourist destination including Pokhara to make transform those destinations as responsible and sustainable. Tourists’ active involvements and commitments for responsible tourism can be valuable for tourism for its contribution for peace-building in Pokhara and also in Nepal. Furthermore, the returning tourists through word-of-mouth reporting of their experience of responsible tourism can act as triggering factors not only for building favorable tourists destination image but also attracting other new responsible tourists to particular tourist destinations in Pokhara. In these scenarios, followings codes of conduct are designated for tourist for their sincere applications while they are in Pokhara and its vicinity.

Dos

**Acquainting with the characteristics of destination**
Tourists and visitors have the responsibility to acquaint themselves, even before their departure, with the characteristics of Nepal and Pokhara as a destination.

**Behaving locally**
Respect local cultures, customs, social structures, norms, values and beliefs. Be sensitively aware of the feelings of local people and host cultures and do not do anything what might be offensive behaviour on their part.

**Concept of time table**
Realize that often the people in Pokhara they (tourists) visit have time concepts and thought patterns different from their own; this does not make them inferior, only different.
Don’ts

Illegal activities
Refrain from smuggling and trafficking of illicit drugs, arms, antiques, protected species and products and substances that are dangerous or prohibited by national and regional regulations.

Conduct with local people and environment
Abstain from any conduct felt to be offensive or injurious by the local population, or anything which is likely to damage the local environment.
Conclusion

Although often underestimated, the tourism industry can help promote peace and stability both in Nepal in general and Pokhara in particular by diversifying the economy (e.g. through jobs, income generation, etc.), protecting local environment and environment-related natural and cultural resources, promoting cross-cultural awareness, and solidifying local tradition and culture. However, there is high need to address the key challenges if peace-enhancing benefits from this industry are to be realized in a realistic situation where there are observable gaps on mutual knowledge and actions, as validated by this manual, to achieve responsible development of tourism in Pokhara.

These, amidst others, include the development of CoC manual which is a vital step in careful and indigenous responsible tourism planning and implementation of such planning framed with appropriate guidelines in tourism sector of Pokhara. Furthermore, continuous positive changes and up-scaling in attitude, intention, awareness and knowledge and concerted efforts of all stakeholders on the values and functions of CoC at destination level in Pokhara are desirable to mitigate the conflict sensitivity of tourism and help generate peace and prosperity through peace responsiveness of tourism in Pokhara. In this context, the statement of Dr. Taleb Rifai, the immediate past Secretary-General of the UNWTO is relevant who mentioned that ‘only an ethical foundation and a commitment to sustainability can ensure that tourism’s enormous potential to do good is harnessed, and any negative impact curtailed. The recognition thereof is at the heart of UNWTO’s guiding policy document, the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism’ (UNWTO 2011, p 1).
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About this Manual

The key thrust of this Codes of Conduct Manual is to promote lasting peace and prosperity through tourism by making it (tourism) responsible and sustainable apart from its speedy growth in Pokhara. As linked with the NCCR North-South associated PhD study in the interrelationship between 'tourism, conflict and peace' held in Kathmandu University, it is the outcome of the partnership actions of tourism practitioners, Nepal Tourism Board, tourism researchers, and other stakeholders (local administration, security agency and CBOs) led by Pokhara Tourism Council and NCCR North-South on transdisciplinary approach. The information in this manual is largely based on universally accepted 10 principles of UNWTO's Global Code of Ethics. Methodologically, this manual formulation process was based on a number of bilateral interactions with 22 professional organizations/associations (e.g. tourism and semi-tourism associations, and the media sector) and a regional seminar which had beforehand identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of these 22 varied tourism related enterprises through their respective professional associations in Pokhara.

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