



SCOP VISITING TRADITIONAL RURAL COMMUNITIES

This SOP outlines guidelines to ensure that all traditional, rural, and community-based and activities are conducted in a legal, safe, respectful, and environmentally and socially responsible manner, while fostering trust, mutual respect, and long-term benefits for host communities.

Guidelines

1. Ensure applicable legal permits & permission to access activity area are in place
2. Ensure insurance for participants & team is in place
3. Respect local leadership / traditional governance structures; their permission being obtained for visits to take place
4. Identify health & safety risks, implement management systems & provide appropriate safety equipment
5. Ensure enough team members are available in case of emergency
6. Monitor activity area conditions (including weather) in advance & during the activity
7. Be familiar with activity area & ensure that navigation & communication tools are in good working order
8. Maximise local economic benefits through employment & purchasing
9. Engage local stakeholders about how the activity should happen & to ensure social & environmental impacts are managed responsibly
10. Agree expectations & responsibilities of experience with local businesses / hosts
11. Ensure regular engagement with local businesses / hosts to improve quality & ensure that respect for cultural heritage is maintained
12. Avoid single use & disposable items, provide adequate waste collection facilities for safe disposal (or pack out what you take in) & pick up any rubbish found along the way



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13. Be waterwise & take proactive measures to use water sparingly
14. Minimize energy used in the activity as part of a climate action strategy
15. Provide information in advance about your sustainability actions, activity accessibility, what to expect & what to bring
16. Screen participants to make sure that the activity is well suited to their fitness & level of ability
17. Manage group size to minimize impacts & ensure a safe guide/participant ratio
18. Ensure that activity vehicles do not disturb residents
19. Obtain written confirmation, e.g. via indemnity, from participants that they are aware of activity risks
20. Brief participants about do's & don'ts, safety, what to expect, applicable etiquette / conduct to be respectful of, topics of conversation that might be culturally inappropriate, activity areas / buildings that might be off-limits & logistical considerations before the activity starts
21. In sensitive socio-economic or cultural contexts, e.g. communities with little contact with other cultures, someone from the local community must accompany the group
22. Share information about local nature & culture, as well as social development / conservation projects that participants may want to support
23. Facilitate opportunities for meaningful exchange with local people
24. Show respect for the land, waterways, wildlife & other users in the activity area
25. Repair & compensate for any damage caused to the activity area
26. Contribute to conserving activity area integrity; let relevant authorities / leadership know about any concerns & participate in rehabilitation projects