



ÉCOVOLUNTEERING ETHICAL CHARTER



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Ethical charter of Eco volunteering

Commitment 1: Transparency on the use of funds

Where volunteers contribute financially to their mission, the organiser commits to **full transparency on how the money is used**. This includes highlighting the percentage or the amount going to the host project, to the organiser and, where applicable, to an intermediary, as well as the percentage or the amount dedicated to the volunteers' accommodation and food.

Commitment 2: Objective communication

The organiser commits to providing **honest, explicit and objective information** about the mission(s) on site. This information must cover and detail:

1. The research or conservation programme, in particular its objectives, methodology and, where possible, its results and publications.
2. The involvement of the volunteers in the project and how they are supervised.
3. The social, economic and ecological impact, in particular:
 - a. The involvement of local populations and the impact on the community.
 - b. The impact of the mission on the local economy.
 - c. The ecological impact of the mission.

Commitment 3: Preparing volunteers for the mission

The organiser commits to putting in place preparation ahead of the volunteers' departure, in order to:

- Optimise their cultural immersion,
- Clarify the meaning of their involvement within the host project,
- Inform volunteers about their conditions of participation (accommodation, comfort, travel arrangements).

This preparation can take the form of documentation, a meeting, or any other suitable format.

Commitment 4: Limiting the environmental impact

The organiser commits to assessing and limiting the **environmental impact** of their mission, and to giving volunteers access to detailed information. The organiser also commits to implementing actions aimed at reducing these impacts, for example:

- Recommendations to volunteers on eco-friendly habits to adopt,
- Recommendations on CO2 emission offset programmes,
- Adjusting the minimum duration of the mission according to its distance (a balance between the local benefits generated by the mission and the ecological impact of the journey).

Commitment 5: Gathering volunteers' feedback

The organiser commits to collecting volunteers' experiences (for example: **testimonials, reports**) and publishing them. In addition, wherever possible, the organiser commits to putting former and future volunteers in touch with one another.

Commitment 6: Regular evaluation of projects

The organiser commits to carrying out regular evaluations of the projects it offers to its volunteers, based on:

- Consistency between the original project and its current content
- Consideration of volunteers' testimonials about the project
- Any results achieved
- Projects in development

Commitment 7: Recognising volunteers' contributions

The organiser commits to publishing, on a regular basis, reports on the project's actions and results, and on the achievements, volunteers contributed to during their mission.

Commitment 8: Consideration of animal welfare

The organiser commits to refusing any side activity involving the **use of wild animals for recreational purposes** (for example: swimming with dolphins, circuses, animal training, feeding for tourism purposes, etc.). In the case of animal sanctuaries, the organiser commits to offering only projects whose priority is to reintroduce animals into their natural habitat, and which keep these animals in the sanctuary only when their reintroduction proves impossible.

Proposed Eco volunteer charter

Working document for the participatory workshop of 01/12/2018

Commitment 1: CHOOSE MINDFULLY

Beyond personal selection criteria, the volunteer commits to choosing a project based on the 8 points of the Ethical Charter of Eco volunteering, or any other key document available to them to help guide their choice.

Commitment 2: COMMIT FULLY

Before signing up for a mission, the volunteer commits to finding out about the hosting and participation conditions they will encounter within the project, and to meeting the requirements it sets.

Commitment 3: BE EFFECTIVE ON-SITE

Before departing for a sustainable project, the participant commits to enquiring about the project, the geographical and climatic conditions, as well as the cultural, economic and social context in which it takes place. The participant also commits to taking part in a preparatory training session if one is offered by the host organisation.

Commitment 4: PARTICIPATE WITH RESPECT

The volunteer is aware of being a guest within the project and commits to behaving with all due sensitivity towards their host, respecting safety instructions, the animals and the environment, and basic rules of communal living. For the duration of the mission, the volunteer will be prepared to set aside their comfort and habits, and to adapt to the hosting conditions and their new environment, respecting local cultures.

Commitment 5: SHARE AND BE TOLERANT

The volunteer commits to living and sharing their experience with the other participants and/or project members. They commit to opening up, with the greatest

tolerance, to the other cultures they encounter, and will seek to meet residents and share in their daily lives.

Commitment 6: STAY FLEXIBLE DURING THE MISSION

The volunteer does not take part in a fixed, predetermined activity, and commits to adapting, at the time of their participation, to the project's needs relating to the mission they have signed up for.

Commitment 7: LIMIT THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The volunteer commits to limiting the environmental impact caused directly or indirectly by their participation by:

- Adjusting the duration of their participation according to the distance and the transportation chosen (a balance between the local benefits of the mission and the ecological impact of the journey, CO2 offsetting).
- Favouring the most environmentally friendly transportation.
- Using eco-friendly products: soap, laundry detergent, sunscreen, solar-powered electrical equipment, etc.
- Adopting eco-friendly habits on-site: water use, waste management, energy consumption, etc.

Commitment 8: DO NOT EXPECT IMMEDIATE RESULTS

The volunteer is aware of joining an existing project and contributing to long-term action. Like a link in a chain, they will continue the work of previous volunteers and prepare the ground for those who come next. Even if their actions do not produce direct results, volunteers are aware of contributing to in-depth, long-term work.

Commitment 9: GIVE MINDFULLY

The volunteer's participation is entirely voluntary and constitutes a gift in its own right, for which they can expect nothing in return other than the satisfaction of having contributed to the progress of the project they are taking part in.

Commitment 10: BECOME AN AMBASSADOR

Upon returning from the mission, the volunteer will continue their engagement by sharing their experience with those around them. All the know-how, skills and interpersonal qualities acquired on-site make them the best possible ambassador for the project!

This Charter was developed by Cybelle Planète, among others, then revised and co-signed by around twenty organisations from the humanitarian and responsible travel sector, including Freepackers, Realstep and Voyageurs et Voyagistes Ecovolontaires, in December 2018.