

Number	Title	Owner	Last Updated	Next Review Date
-	Ethical Expeditions Policy	CEO	Nov 2022	Nov 2024

Ethical Expeditions Policy

Context And Introduction

British Exploring Society provides youth development experiences in a wide range of remote and wild locations and relies on a broad stakeholder network to deliver its work.

Our work brings us into contact with young people between the ages of 14 and 25, some of whom may be particularly vulnerable. We work alongside a large community of professional volunteers, with families and carers, schools and public institutions, other charities and local communities. We are a membership organisation. We benefit from the support of a diverse group of individual donors, trusts and foundations to deliver our work. Our strategy makes a public commitment to environmental awareness and to operating responsibly in wild, remote and fragile environments. We are also committed to fostering positive community engagement and impact through our work.

The Purpose Of This Policy

We value all our stakeholders. They are all important to our effectiveness as a charity. Taking into account the wider potential impact of our decisions beyond the benefits to young people - and the perception and likely response to the decisions we make - is an important part of our decision making process. It requires a framework.

Given the strategic commitments we have already made, British Exploring Society must be able to look beyond the legal and operational requirements for running an expedition and consider other impacts. A number of these issues will also have reputational and, potentially, financial risk implications which they can be further assessed against.

Scope

Considerations of wider impact are taken into account as a matter of course prior to an expedition being approved for development. This policy is for situations where new information may require the cancellation of an expedition where we have already made significant commitments, up to the point of departure.

This policy is to:

- help to ensure that proceeding with an expedition does not run counter to the best interests of communities and ecosystems within which we operate;
- help to ensure that decisions are not made on an ad hoc basis but are grounded in the mission and agreed policy objectives of the charity;
- provide a clear objective standard against which external regulatory bodies can judge the actions of the charity in cases of potential or actual dispute;

- protect the reputation of the charity against adverse public reaction from existing or potential stakeholders;
- provide a consistent backdrop for decision-making where the best interests of communities and ecosystems and the reputation of British Exploring Society are deemed to be at risk, at any stage of expedition planning.

Our Approach And Process

This Policy sets out a simple framework for how British Exploring Society makes decisions beyond legal and operational considerations as to whether a given expedition should go ahead. The guiding principle for this approach is that it should be the Council (Trustees of British Exploring Society) which agrees the overall policy on ethical expeditions in line with the mission and purpose of the organisation and its beneficiaries and this Policy, rather than the organisation's employees - based on their own beliefs and values.

Who Is Involved

The Council approves and reviews the policy and framework as it relates to ethical expeditions. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will communicate this to the wider team and embed it in the working practices of the charity. This will include regular monitoring and annual review as well as seeking the advice and approval of the board on a case-by-case basis.

Grounds For Reviewing An Expedition

The executive team will approach the CEO and/or Council when they have evidence that the charity's objectives may no longer be served by running an expedition/they believe the positive benefit of the expedition does not now outweigh the anticipated negative consequences and/or there is no mitigation at this stage that can be put in place with lower impact on the participants, community, wildlife and ecosystem. For example;

We are now required to carry weapons as a risk mitigation measure;

Working with a specific community is deemed exploitative;

Delivering an expedition requires us to work with animals without us being able to guarantee their welfare;

Our own environmental assessment of the impact of our basecamp is unsatisfactory;

To travel at a particular time or to a particular location risks a judgement of foolhardiness or insensitivity rather than confidence.

The Process

The process will inevitably require a variety of assessments to take place beyond the operational or legal. In some instances, this will require judgement as much as evidence. Wherever possible,

reasonable external evidence of potential or likely impact should be sought and documented. This evidence will be provided to the CEO and/or Council as part of this process and such evidence will be collated from a variety of sources and stakeholders or members of the executive.

Our Head of Expeditions will manage the ongoing review of expeditions to ensure that the CEO and Council are informed of any programmes that require review subject to this policy.

Depending on the urgency of a decision, an extraordinary meeting of Council may be called in relation to this policy.

Record Keeping

Any decision making, based on this policy, will be clearly recorded in detail in council minutes and be kept on record in accordance with British Exploring Society's Data Retention Policy.