



Great Himalaya Trail

ESG REPORT

Great Himalaya Trail 2023-24



“Making Progress”



Great Himalaya Trail

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PEOPLE & PLACES

A STEP FORWARD

This report is an update to signing the Glasgow Declaration in 2023, see Annex 1 for reference. Since our initial social impact surveys in 2020, we have focused on 6 key areas: Visitor Satisfaction, Social Participation, Ratio of Visitors:Locals, Contribution of Resources, Waste Management, and Workers' Conditions.

In each of these areas we have made some progress to generating more positive outcomes for both communities and their heritage.

Overall scoring for People and Places has seen an encouraging improvement of 8% against the 2020 baseline year. However, we are hampered by a lack of resources to fully evaluate all impact indicators.

VISITOR SATISFACTION

In 2020, we identified that a major source of visitor dissatisfaction was based in unrealistic expectations, for example, that popular main trails



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would be uncrowded in peak season. Many false expectations are exacerbated by misinformation from trekking agents in Nepal, who will say almost anything to secure a deal.

To combat the misinformation and to establish realistic expectations, we have updated information on the GHT website and are only promoting trekking companies that have proven integrity. So now we only recommend selected trekking companies that are Travelife (www.travelife.info) members and who clearly inform their clients about ground realities.

In our 2024 assessment, we believe that based on the feedback that we have received from trekkers, we have made a positive contribution to visitor satisfaction.

2020 Score = 5 / 5

2024 Score = 5 / 5

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

In 2020, we found that there were a number of opportunities to further engage with communities and build a stronger bond between them and their guests. There were two key areas that we wanted to work on:

- 1. Co-creating itineraries – this is especially true when using homestays and smaller teahouses and involves identifying new trail options and places to stay.*
- 2. Highlighting new places to stay – this helps to spread the benefits of tourism.*

From feedback from communities, we found that the yellow highlighting of place names made a considerable impact on trekkers' choice of places to stay. So, we have changed some highlights to



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encourage more distribution of benefits. We have also highlighted new trail options identified by communities as places they would like to develop.

2020 Score = 4 / 5

2024 Score = 4.5 / 5

RATIO OF VISITORS:LOCALS

In 2020, we found that the Everest region in particular was suffering from over-tourism with a ratio of 6:1 in the peak season. Accordingly, our efforts have concentrated on two areas:

- 1. Encouraging trekkers to visit areas away from the main trails in peak season.*
- 2. Encouraging trekkers to visit popular areas outside of peak season.*

The first goal has been difficult to influence as visitors often have pre-conceived plans and timings. Although we have not recommended a single trekker to visit the Everest region in October-November, numbers to the area have remained high.

Our success with the second goal has been more apparent as GHT trekkers have been shifting to out of the main seasons. In 2022, we saw our first monsoon GHT attempts and in 2023, 8 people successfully traversed Nepal through monsoon. In 2024, 6 people have completed or are in the process of crossing Nepal. This is a fantastic step forward for off-season trekking!

2020 Score = 2 / 5

2024 Score = 3 / 5



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CONTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES

In 2020, visitor spend in communities was being reduced as trekkers and, more importantly, trekking companies, were purchasing items from Kathmandu and taking them into the mountains. This significantly eroded community income and we have worked with our selected trekking companies to reduce prior-purchasing to near zero-levels. In 2020, the average spend per trek in communities was less than 20% of total trek expenditure. In 2024, it has risen to 30% of average trek payments.

2020 Score = 3 / 5

2024 Score = 4 / 5

WASTE MANAGEMENT

In 2020, waste management was identified as the single greatest problem for communities and the environment. This is a complex problem, involving many stakeholders and cultural norms, making improvement a serious challenge.

One of the areas that generates waste is food packing and this has been our first priority as it links with several other indicators. By purchasing food locally, we are able to increase our in-community spend and reduce packing, which is near zero in the mountains. We also strongly discourage snacks like chocolate bars, potato chips and soft drinks, which all come in plastic packaging.

The outcome is that from the average waste generated of 6.8kg per trekker per day, we now see GHT trekkers generating less than 500g per day. However, plastic from instant noodle packets, pasta and cooking oil are still common.



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Moving forward, we want to link more strongly with the Sagamartha Next project in the Khumbu, which offers some very interesting and impactful approaches to waste management.

2020 Score = 1 / 5

2024 Score = 2 / 5

WORKERS' CONDITIONS

In 2020, we had not included worker conditions in our community survey as they are tied to the trekking companies rather than trekkers or external stakeholders. However, now that we are working more closely with selected trekking companies, we have now included them. Our efforts concern keeping loads within prescribed regulation limits (many companies increased loads at the start of treks) and ensuring full training for health and safety – this topic is especially concerning on the highest and hardest GHT sections.

In 2023, we provide financial support for GHT 5 guides to do advanced Wilderness First Aid training (through KEEP) and in 2024, we will be updating the website to reflect Worker's Conditions that trekkers need to monitor.

2020 Score = 0 / 5

2024 Score = 3 / 5



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MyGHTI SCORECARD

DATE: 1-Jul-24

40 criteria with a weighting of 1 - 5 importance

Topic Groups	Impact Areas - what can we realistically do?	Assessment Method / Metric	Related SDG	Values 0 - 5				Progression/YOY Performance Score					Group Score
				Baseline Year 2020 Value	Target 2030	Target 2050	2024 CURRENT YEAR	Impact Weighting (1-5)		Weighted Score AxB		Current Impact % C/D	
								Max Possible Score Bx5	Gap C-D				
PEOPLE & PLACES	Community satisfaction	Direct survey	SDG1	5	5	5	-	0	0	0	0		
	Visitor satisfaction	Visitor trend & SM posts	SDG1	5	5	5	5	0	3	0	15	-15	0%
	Skills development	Direct survey	SDG8	2	-	5	-	0		0	0	0	
	Cultural Erosion	Direct survey	SDG11	4	5	5	-	0		0	0	0	
	Social Participation	% Itinerary co-creation	SDG11	4	5	5	4.5	0.5	4	2	20	-18	10%
	Wellbeing Burden	Direct survey	SDG5	3	-	5	-	0		0	0	0	
	Ratio visitors : locals (total treks & most popular)	Visitor number : sensus	SDG11	2	4	5	3	1	5	5	25	-20	20%
	Access to Capital	Municipality records	SDG1 & 8	3	-	5	-	0		0	0	0	
	Agreement (group/individual)	Direct survey	SDG10	5	-	5	-	0		0	0	0	
	Extent of Engagement	Direct survey	SDG8	5	-	5	-	0		0	0	0	
	Cultural Dilution	Direct survey	SDG8	2	5	5	-	0		0	0	0	
	Contribution of Resources	visitor spend	SDG9	3	5	5	4	1	5	5	25	-20	20%
	Gender Inclusivity	Direct survey	SDG5	3	-	5	-	0		0	0	0	
	Waste Management	Municipality records	SDG6, 12 & 13	1	4	5	2	1	5	5	25	-20	20%
	Degree of Control	Municipality records & survey	SDG10, 15 & 16	2	4	5	-	0		0	0	0	
	Workers Conditions	Travelife agents	SDG8	0	5	5	3	3	5	15	25	-10	60%
8%													



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CLIMATE & PLANET AIMING 4 ZERO

Our first attempt to measure the GHGe footprints of treks has evolved into a through system that incorporates international emission calculations methodologies. We integrated the Carmacal flight and land transport calculator in 2023, which has aligned us with EU standards.

More accurate information has also allowed us to make a GHGe Climate Plan¹, albeit from an already very low base.

During 2023-24, we focused on reducing our administration footprint as well as increasing human powered options in itineraries and replacing flights with land transport options as much as possible. This final task is somewhat problematic in the Himalaya region as road safety and flight safety are both very poor. However, by focusing on itineraries where flights and road transport can be reduced, we have managed to reduce our Scope 3 emissions.

¹ <https://www.greathimalayatrail.com/ght-climate-action-plan/>



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Overall scoring for Climate and Planet has seen an encouraging improvement of 25% against the 2020 baseline year. However, we are hampered by a lack of resources to fully evaluate all impact indicators.

For the 2023-24 period, our GHG emissions have been:

	SCOPE 1&2	SCOPE 3
2023-2024	150kgCO ₂ e	10,388kgCO ₂ e
Baseline Year 2020	7,023kgCO ₂ e	unknown

Our total Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions for 2023-24 were **10,538kgCO₂e**, which is **502kgCO₂e** per GHT trekker.

Moving forward, our aim is to reduce Scope 3 transportation emissions through the use of EVs in Kathmandu, more efficient cooking methods in the field (replacing old stoves), and less reliance on porters by sourcing more fuels and foods locally.

BIODIVERSITY

In 2023-24, GHT contributed US\$1,500 to biodiversity projects through the purchase of National Park and Conservation Area entry fees.



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MyGHTI SCORECARD

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				Baseline Year 2020 Value	Target 2030	Target 2050	2024 CURRENT YEAR	Impact Weighting (1-5)	Weighted Score AxB	Max Possible Score Bx5	Gap C-D				
											Current Impact % C/D		A	B	
CLIMATE & PLANET	Climate Plan	SBTI ACA method	SDG13	0	5	5	5	5	5	25	25	0	100%	25%	
	Office/Admin (target 100% renewables)	Power, AC, % renewables	SDG7 & 13	4	5	5	5	1	5	5	25	-20	20%		
	Email hosting (target 100% green)	Invoice	SDG7 & 13	1	5	5	5	4	5	20	25	-5	80%		
	Web & hosting (target 100% green)	Invoice	SDG7 & 13	1	5	5	5	4	5	20	25	-5	80%		
	Maps/Books/Resources (target 100% green)	Paper, printing, distribution	SDG7 & 13	3	5	5	3	0	5	0	25	-25	0%		
	Cooking (reduce from 1lt to 0.3ltpppd)	Fuel type / amount	SDG13	2	4	5	3	1	3	3	15	-12	20%		
	Heating (target 0)	Fuel type / amount	SDG13	3	4	5	5	2	3	6	15	-9	40%		
	Land transport	Carmacal	SDG13	2	4	5	3	1	4	4	20	-16	20%		
	% Human Powered Transportation	% distance	SDG3 & 13	4	5	5	4	0	5	0	25	-25	0%		
	Flights total miles flown	Carmacal	SDG13	2	4	5	3	1	5	5	25	-20	20%		
	Pollution	Toilet management	SDG13 & 15	3	5	5	-	0	5	0	25	-25	0%		
	Marine & Water	Toilet management	SDG14	5	5	5	-	0	5	0	25	-25	0%		
	Biodiversity	NP/CA entry payments	SDG14 & 15	3	5	5	-	0	5	0	25	-25	0%		
	Waste Created (company)	Packaging weight	SDG12	5	5	5	5	0	5	0	25	-25	0%		
	Circular economy	Local supply	SDG12	5	5	5	5	0	5	0	25	-25	0%		



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OUR GOVERNANCE OPENNESS IS KEY

As a volunteer-based organisation our overheads are very small and covered by commissions from the sale of books and maps, with additional donations.

Since moving web and email to Hetzner, our total monthly bills have been stable at Euro50.81, although average declining sales are a concern driven by decreasing demand for printed products and our lack of resources to digitise content for use on phones. Operating expenses include the website, email, couriers and postage.

We are now rebuilding cash reserves, which were heavily depleted during Covid, with the goal of having 24 months operational expenses on hand. To boost revenue by improving distribution we are seeking a new publisher of the trekking maps that has strong international outreach. We also need to integrate Travelife and Trustpilot.

Our overall scorecard result indicates no improvement from our baseline year of 2020.



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OPERATING PROFIT YE:30-06-2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
REVENUES	\$1,232.00	\$342.00	\$1,864.00	\$2,245.00	\$1,977.20
DONATIONS RECEIVED	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$42.00
OPERATING EXPENSES	\$1,840.32	\$1,440.32	\$1,840.32	\$1,680.24	\$1,522.72
DONATIONS PAID				\$550.00	
OPERATING PROFIT	-\$608.32	-\$98.32	\$23.68	\$14.76	\$496.48
DEPRECIATION	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
INTEREST	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
NET PROFIT	-\$608.32	-\$98.32	\$23.68	\$14.76	\$496.48
TAX	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
PROFIT AFTER TAX	-\$608.32	-\$98.32	\$23.68	\$14.76	\$496.48
OPENING BALANCE	\$709.36	\$101.04	\$2.72	\$26.40	\$41.16
CHANGE IN CASH	-\$608.32	-\$98.32	\$23.68	\$14.76	\$496.48
CLOSING BALANCE	\$101.04	\$2.72	\$26.40	\$41.16	\$537.64

In conclusion, we have made a good start to assessing and monitoring the impact of the GHT, but there is a long way to go and we must do more.

“Striving to do better”



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MyGHTI SCORECARD

DATE:

1-Jul-24

40 criteria with a weighting of 1 - 5 importance

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				Baseline Year 2020 Value	Target 2030	Target 2050	2024 CURRENT YEAR	Impact Weighting (1-5)	Weighted Score AxB	Max Possible Score Bx5	Gap C-D		Current Impact % C/D	
GOVERNANCE & BUSINESS PRACTICE	Months of Operational Cash Reserves (>24)	Bank statement		1	5	5	1	0	5	0	25	-25	0%	0%
	Operational CF / Interest Payments (10:1)	No interest payments		5	5	5	5	0	4	0	20	-20	0%	
	Debt/Asset Ratio (target <15%)	No debts		5	5	5	5	0	3	0	15	-15	0%	
	Days payable (target <30)	No payables		5	5	5	5	0	3	0	15	-15	0%	
	Independent audit	Travelife	Not yet implemented	-	5	5	-	0	3	0	15	-15	0%	
	Trust rating	Website	Not yet implemented	-	5	5	-	0	3	0	15	-15	0%	
	% of Complaints (target <1%)	<1%		-	5	5	5	0	3	0	15	-15	0%	
	% of Self-Generated Bookings	>90% through site enquiry		5	5	5	5	0	3	0	15	-15	0%	
	% of Repeat Bookings	>10% through site		5	5	5	5	0	3	0	15	-15	0%	
SCORECARD TOTAL											500	-412	88	18%



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ANNEX 1: GLASGOW DECLARATION DETAILS 2023.

The Great Himalaya Trail promotes sustainable and responsible tourism across the Himalaya. We began with developing a Code of Conduct for trekkers 10 years² ago and expanded the idea to travel companies. However, the industry was not prepared to become more sustainable back then, so we focused on educating tourists through a guide book, maps and information that stress sustainability in decision making.

Since 2019, we have again focused on operators. We only recommend companies³ that are certified by Travelife and they started asking for tools to better understand the impact of their operations and tours. So, we have developed a carbon calculator⁴ for trekking and mountaineering companies to use to assess their CO₂, energy, water and waste impacts of activities. We have also pioneered a social impact assess system, MyGHTi⁵, for tourism activities.

In combination, our impact assessment system covers 15 SDGs and we try to guide tourists to make more informed decisions before and during their journey. Our system is backed up by empirical, peer-reviewed research and has led to a number of papers printed in international literature, including the World Heritage Site 50th Anniversary⁶.

Our overall GHT vision of sustainability is to develop world-class tools for MSMEs to assess, manage and offset their footprints in ways that promote inclusion and empowerment across the Himalaya.

² <https://www.greathimalayatrail.com/ght-code-of-conduct/>

³ <https://www.greathimalayatrail.com/trekking-companies/>

⁴ <https://www.greathimalayatrail.com/the-impact-of-your-trek/>

⁵ <https://www.greathimalayatrail.com/myghti/>

⁶ https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-05660-4_22



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The MyGHTi Vision:

Empowering communities to provide transformative experiences along the Great Himalaya Trail by promoting thriving female-owned, sustainable, regenerative micro-enterprises.

MyGHTi Goals:

1. Empower female-owned enterprises to control and manage tourism within their communities and distribute profits to local causes.
2. Host-communities are recognised as the primary custodians and guardians of fragile Himalayan landscapes, cultures and traditions.
3. Be world-renowned for offering unique transformative experiences in exceptionally scenic, remote and diverse landscapes.
4. Work towards permanent protection for all Himalayan landscapes, as well as keeping them well maintained and effectively managed.
5. MyGHTi will achieve its goals through enhancing the strength and commitment of community groups, staff and volunteers, and the broader adventure travel community.

The GHT Climate Action Plan can be found at:

<https://www.greathimalayatrail.com/ght-climate-action-plan/>



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ANNEX 2: GHG EMISSION CALCULATION METHODOLOGY

TRANSPORT

For flights and land transport we use the Carmacal Tool (carmacal.org) based on appropriately sized vehicles up to 30-seater, 6Lt diesel bus that uses 50Lt per 100km @ average 30km/h, as opposed to a 4-seater, 1.6Lt car that uses 50Lt per 300km. Additionally, we use a RFI value of 3 for all flights in Nepal.

COOKING FUEL

All fuels burn poorly at altitude and are contaminated, so reduce figures by 50% on average.

One litre of kerosene produces about 10 kWh - down to 3 kWh for old stoves (note MSR stoves are much more efficient). Seasoned wood produces 4.1kWh per kg but open fire mountain wood is more like 2 kWh. To cook 1BF, 1 L, 1D and 3Lt drinking water to cook a meal for 8 people uses about 25kg, or 11Lt (big stove) or 3Lt (MSR stove) kerosene. So, per person wood = 3kg / Kerosene: Group Stove = 1.38Lt or MSR = 0.375Lt Kerosene => Fuel required for Each Human Powered Day = 6.25kWh per person

FOOD

Food emissions are based on eating local food, dhal bhat, twice a day combined with a light breakfast, calculated using the following method:

1kg of boiled lentils = 1160 calories / 1kg of boiled rice = 1110calories
/ 1kg of cooked vegetables = 550calories



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For Dhal Bhat = 250g rice / 100g lentils or eggs / 200g veg = approx 625 calories per serving (550g total weight of food), 2 servings, twice a day = 2,500 calories PLUS breakfast and snacks of 500 calories = total 3000calories. So, we can summarise:

- *As 1000 calories = 1.163kWh, Food Required for Each Human Powered Day 3000 calories = 3.489 kWh*
- *KG of CO2 produced per KG foods: eggs = 5, rice = 3, lentils = 2, veggies = 0.4*
- *KG of CO2 produced per LT For KG of Fuel: wood = 1.83, kerosene = 3.00, butane = 3.03*
- *KG of CO2 produced per KM for air transport: assume 80% efficiency due to load*

For budgeting, take average daily ingredients (double the cost of KTM, using FAO AGRISTAT: Nepal) to estimate cost of healthy diet (local produce) per person per day:

- *In Nepal = = US\$4.621 = NRs620*
- *In Bhutan = US\$5.339/day*

WASTE

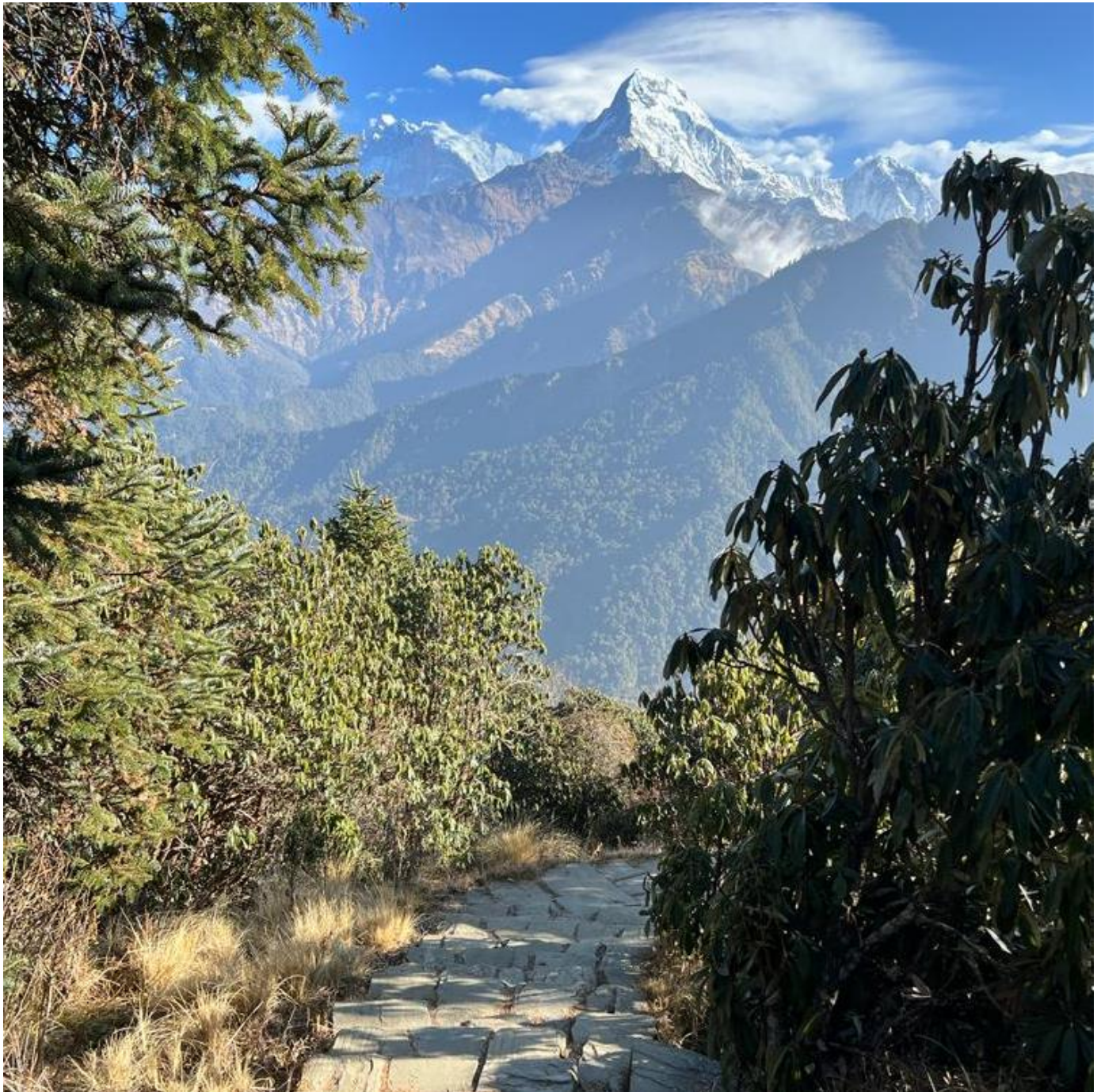
Waste is a total of full team waste then divided by number of trekkers. GHT estimate for organic waste generated by Using and Buying Local = 150g per trekker per day. This is in contrast to general trekkers - Byers/Gustafsson⁷ estimate 6.8kg per international full-service trekker per day (plastic, cans, glass, card and paper)

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https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350812714_A_Sustainable_Solid_Waste_Management_Plan_for_Sagarmatha_Mt_Everest_National_Park_and_Buffer_Zone_Nepal



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