



ACTIVELY GREEN STANDARD V2.1

Guiding principles for sustainable
destination development

Standard Development

The Actively Green Business Standard was developed in collaboration with Sustainable Travel International and Walking Mountains Science Center with support from Town of Vail. The v1 standard was implemented by local businesses from November 2013 – Present. All questions, comments, and suggestions from businesses who implemented the v1 standard were recorded and addressed within the v2 standard which is fully aligned with the GSTC Industry Criteria. The v2.1 standard addresses conditions from the GSTC Accreditation Panel for recognition.

Standard Revisions

The v2 standard was submitted to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council on August 1, 2017 for formal recognition. The v2.1 standard was submitted to the GSTC on November 20, 2017. The standard will undergo a review process at least every three years.

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1.0 Business Planning

1.1 Regulatory Compliance

Regulatory Compliance

1.1.1a

Criteria: The company is in compliance with all local, national, and international regulations including up-to date labor, land use, environmental, health and safety, operational permits/licenses and approvals as required by law within the regions of operation.

Objective: To ensure compliance with all local, national, and international legislation and regulations.

Evaluation Guidelines:

i) signed, notarized, and legally binding affidavit from the president, GM or CEO that attests to meeting the following requirements at a minimum:

a) legally able to operate as a business within the destination and has no outstanding disputes

b) implements a fair labor policy that states at a minimum “the company will provide a safe and secure working environment, respects labor rights and does not discriminate based on race, sex, religion, pregnancy, health status or political affiliation and pays a legal wage. The company does not permit employment or contracting of the services of minors under the age of 14. And Criteria: The company does not commercially, sexually or otherwise exploit women, children, adolescents, minorities, and other vulnerable groups”

c) implements an ethics policy that stipulates the company will treat employees and clients with respect and fairness, has a clause against sexual harassment, and notes how the company will achieve these goals and measure its success (e.g., through feedback mechanisms, focus groups, etc.)

ii) up to date list of all applicable legal requirements

iii) evidence that these regulations and policies are communicated to all new hires (e.g., publicly posted, in new employee orientation, etc.)

iv) supports actions against child sex tourism (e.g. The Code)

1.2 Operational Planning

Business Plan

1.2.1a

Criteria: The company has a written mission statement and a code of conduct pledge for both business management and customer-related activities.

Objective: To ensure that the organization has defined their mission and business practices.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) mission statement
- ii) company values
- iii) evidence that the mission statement and values are being communicated to employees

Green Team

1.2.2a

Criteria: The company has assigned an employee to oversee and coordinate the company's health and safety planning, environmental management, social responsibility, community engagement, and customer communications.

Objective: To establish a diverse team dedicated to sustainability management of the business.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) identified "green team" employee(s)
- ii) documented roles and responsibilities of employee(s)

1.2.2b

Criteria: The company provides employees with an opportunity to periodically participate in sustainability meetings about Criteria: The company's operations.

Objective: To include employees in sustainability decision making and implementation.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) training materials
- ii) list of employees who attended meetings
- iii) minutes from sustainability meeting

1.3 Sustainability Planning

Sustainability Policy and Action Plan

1.3.1a

Criteria: The company has a written sustainability policy and action plan that is suitable to its size and scope and provides the vision, objectives, goals, and framework for the sustainability management system and initiatives.

Objective: To ensure the company has a suitable sustainability management system that provides a framework for developing a sustainable business.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) documented sustainability policy that identifies the company's vision, sustainability objectives and goals, and is focused on continuous improvement
- ii) action plan for monitoring the company's sustainability performance
- iii) policy and plan should address the following issues at a minimum:
 - a) sustainability planning
 - b) environmental management
 - c) socio-economic equality and human rights
 - d) quality, health and safety
 - e) natural and cultural heritage
 - f) risk and crisis management
- iv) evidence that the actions have been implemented and there is a plan for continuous improvement
- v) evidence that the policy and action plan has been shared with customers, employees, and the general public (e.g., training manual, website, company literature, etc.)

1.3.1b

Criteria: The company makes available to the public an annual sustainability report including current results of performance and impacts.

Objective: To ensure transparency and public access to the organization's sustainability report.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) public report addressing positive and negative performance and impacts related to sustainability (e.g., Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Report)
- ii) external communications contains messages inviting consumer and stakeholder support

Sustainable Destination Development

1.3.2a

Criteria: The company ensures its business activities support sustainable destination development and do not jeopardize the provision of basic services or adversely affect access to local resources.

Objective: To ensure business activities do not impact basic services or adversely affect access to local resources.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) signed, notarized, and legally binding affidavit from the president, general manager or CEO (or equivalent) that attests that the company's activities do not jeopardize the provision of basic services such as food, water, energy, healthcare, or sanitation, to neighboring communities nor do they adversely affect local access to livelihoods, including land and aquatic resource use, right-of-way, transport, and housing
- ii) feedback mechanisms are in place for the community to make comments and any issues and/or instances are addressed

1.3.2b

Criteria: The company is actively involved with local community-based organizations that are focused on sustainability, destination planning and development, and/or related issues.

Objective: To support organizations focused on sustainable development and related issues.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) list of regional or local organizations the company is actively involved in
- ii) evidence of participation (e.g. documented contributions, meeting minutes)

2.0 Workplace Practices

2.1 Safety

Safety Plan

2.1.1b

Criteria: The company has implemented a safety plan designed to create a safe working environment which includes safety inspections and first aid supplies as recommended by local regulations.

Objective: To ensure the safety and health of customers and employees.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) safety plan written within the last year that includes the following elements:
 - a) working environment
 - b) check of fire extinguishers
 - c) proper lighting
 - d) proper ventilation
 - e) proper handling of chemicals
 - f) sanitation
 - g) maintenance
 - h) structural soundness of building
 - i) first aid kits and list of what they contain
 - j) accident report and accidents that required visit to clinic
- ii) evidence of implementation of the safety plan
- iii) evidence that all employees have been trained on appropriate aspects of the safety plan

Risk Management

2.1.2b

Criteria: The company has implemented a risk management system and prepares its employees for expected and extreme hazards.

Objective: To identify plausible risks to employees and customers, and to ensure preparedness for them in the event that they manifest.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) risk management plan written within the last year that includes the following elements:
 - a) identification of plausible risks
 - b) employee training for risk management
 - c) customer communications
 - d) evacuation procedures
 - e) customer safety protocols
- ii) evidence of implementation of the risk management plan
- iii) evidence that all employees have been trained on appropriate aspects of the risk management plan

2.2 Infrastructure

Access to Facility

2.2.1b

Criteria: The company has facilities and/or vehicles that are accessible to customers with special needs.

Objective: To ensure that disabled customers or those with special needs have access to facilities/vehicles during normal operations.

Evaluation Guidelines

- i) evidence of adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to the extent possible for business activities
- ii) information on the extent of accessibility is provided to the extent possible

Construction

2.2.2b

Criteria: The company ensures the buildings and infrastructure owned, operated, or otherwise under its direct control remain in compliance with local zoning with special considerations for protected, sensitive, and heritage areas. If the company performs any construction, the capacity and integrity of the natural and cultural surroundings and use of locally appropriate and sustainable practices and materials are taken into account.

Objective: To ensure that during planning, siting, design, construction, renovation, operation and/or demolition that all buildings and infrastructure remain compliant and consider natural and cultural heritage as well as sustainable practices and materials.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) awareness of and compliance with regulations and non-statutory guidance related to land use for the particular zone of operation. Risk factors related to climate change, natural phenomena, and customer safety have been addressed
- ii) if/when construction/renovation/demolition is considered, the company obtains environmental site assessment and/or applicable permits as required by law
- iii) if/when construction/renovation/demolition is considered, the site selection and design takes into account visual amenity, landscape, heritage, biologically sensitive areas, and assimilative capacity of ecosystems
- iv) during normal operations and if/when construction/renovation/demolition occurs, the integrity of archaeological, cultural and/or sacred sites, connectivity of natural sites, and protected areas are preserved
- v) during normal operations and if/when construction/renovation/demolition occurs, threatened or protected species are not displaced, impact on wildlife is minimized/mitigated, water courses/catchments/wetlands are not altered, runoff is reduced, captured, channeled, and/or filtered
- vi) local materials, practices, design features, crafts, regionally appropriate decorations, native plant species, and sustainable materials are considered and implemented to the extent possible
- vii) any and all construction waste is sorted and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner

3.0 Employee Engagement

3.1 Employment Policies

Equitable Employment

3.1.1b

Criteria: The company strives to hire a diversity of employees including women and minorities that are reflective of the local demographics.

Objective: To provide equitable employment opportunities to all genders and ethnicities.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) list of employees
- ii) based on the above, evidence of diversity that is reflective of local demographics
- iii) if women and minorities are not equitably represented, evidence of a policy or plan to meet goal within two years
- iv) in selecting service providers preference is given to those companies that ensure equitable employment to all genders and ethnicities

Equitable Promotion

3.1.2b

Criteria: The company actively hires and promotes internally, a diversity of employees including women and minorities that are reflective of the local demographics into management positions.

Objective: To provide equitable management opportunities to all genders and ethnicities.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) list of employees
- ii) based on the above, evidence of diversity that is reflective of local demographics
- iii) evidence of regular training and opportunities for advancement
- iv) if women and minorities are not equitably represented, evidence of a policy or plan to meet goal within two years
- iv) in selecting service providers preference is given to those companies that ensure equitable advancement to all genders and ethnicities

3.2 Employee Training

Sustainability Training

3.2.1b

Criteria: The company ensures all employees understand how their roles and responsibilities relate to sustainability management systems and provide guidance and training on a periodic basis.

Objective: To engage staff with development and implementation of the sustainability management system and systematically introduce the practical application within the organization.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) defined sustainability training plan that includes the training materials provided, frequency of training necessary, and obligations of staff participation
- ii) evidence of internal training materials and/or access to external training programs related to sustainability management systems
- iii) communications showing training materials have been distributed to employees, e.g., email, signed letters of receipt
- iv) list of employees
- v) list of employees who have participated in sustainability training during the last period
- vi) based on the above, evidence that all employees have participated in sustainability training during the last period
- vii) evidence of feedback from attendees or evaluation of attendees learning

3.3 Employee Feedback

Employee Feedback

3.3.1b

Criteria: The company has a system in place for deriving feedback from employees and keeps a record of the results.

Objective: To provide non-confrontational mechanisms for employee feedback and ensure the company seeks to continually improve moral and working environment for employees.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) copy of employee feedback form or survey
- ii) evidence that employees have been encouraged to provide feedback
- iii) records of employee feedback

- iv) evidence that the feedback was taken into consideration and addressed when appropriate
- v) provides employees with access to multiple mechanisms for communicating and collaborating with management

4.0 Environmental Management

4.1 Waste

Waste Management

4.1.1a

Criteria: The company has implemented a policy to increase recycling, reuse, and composting efforts. It also measures the volume or weight of the waste, including food waste, it recycles and composts as a percentage of the total waste produced on a quarterly basis.

Objective: To establish a measurement of waste diverted from the landfill and key areas to improve recycling and waste diversion.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) documented waste and recycling policy that pledges to increase recycling efforts
- ii) monitoring and tracking report that includes the following:
 - a) report on the total cubic volume or weight of waste generated and associated waste-removal utility costs
 - b) report on the total cubic volume or weight of recyclables and compostables
 - c) calculate total waste generated, total waste recycled and normalize the data against most the appropriate factor (e.g., # of transactions, etc.); frequency should be at least quarterly
- iii) evidence that a waste management plan has been implemented, that:
 - a) identifies key strategies for employees and customers to decrease waste and increase recycling (e.g., provide clearly labeled recycling bins, double-side printing, etc.)
 - b) lists the types of waste to be reduced (e.g., amenities, packaging, single use items, etc.) and lists all types of waste to be separated and recycled (e.g., mixed paper, newspaper, cardboard, aluminum, metal, plastic, steel, glass, etc.) and goals for each
 - c) designates an employee to monitor waste generation, recycling activities, and reduction goals and ensure other employees are aware of these activities
 - d) provides evidence that any residual waste disposal has no adverse effect on the local population and the environment

iv) evidence of how plan is communicated to employees (e.g., email, letter, training materials with a list of participants)

Reductions of Waste

4.1.1b

Criteria: The company is taking steps to reduce waste from multiple sources.

Objective: To further reduce waste through efficient purchasing and the use of reusable, recyclable, compostable, and biodegradable items.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) reduction of materials plan with a focus on all solid waste including purchasing, garbage, food service, amenities, and furniture
- ii) documented measurement of all solid waste
- iii) clearly labeled recycling bins or waste sorting bins are provided in all public areas
- iv) food service items (e.g., dishes, glasses, utensils, etc.) that are reusable, recyclable, compostable, or biodegradable are readily available (e.g., in rooms, in lobby for morning coffee, in employee cafeteria)
- v) amenities such as shampoo or body wash are either in bulk dispensers, in recyclable containers, and/or are recycled or donated rather than placed into the waste stream

Food Related Waste

4.1.2b

Criteria: The company has implemented a plan for minimizing food-related waste.

Objective: To reduce food related waste from packaging.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) plan that incorporates at least three of the following measures:
 - a) food is always purchased in bulk quantities where available;
 - b) company owned containers are used for bulk purchases (within Heath Department regulations);
 - c) food and/or amenity purchases are selected to minimize packaging;
 - d) the company has a contract with a community food cooperative(s) to purchase food in bulk on a regular basis;
 - e) plastic bags, Styrofoam packaging, and bottled water is systematically avoided
 - f) where disposable food utensils are required these are paper and/or compostable
 - g) whenever possible, food leftovers are donated to a local food bank

- h) whenever possible, food waste is composted and/or donated to local farms to act as fertilizer
- ii) evidence that these measures (and others, if applicable) have been implemented
- iii) list of local groups who receive unused food/supplies from company
- iv) records of contributions made that may include estimated value

Disposal of Waste

4.1.3b

Criteria: The company ensures that the storage and disposal of all solid waste, hazardous waste, and e-waste generated on property follows state regulations and/or uses a waste hauler that is disposing of waste properly.

Objective: To safely store and dispose of waste and avoid contamination to humans, wildlife, or the environment.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) waste storage and disposal adheres to local regulation
- ii) waste storage and disposal meets best practice guidelines for local climate and is undertaken safely, hygienically, environmentally soundly, and efficiently to avoid contamination
- iii) evidence that waste is properly stored (e.g., in areas where wildlife is known to get into garbage, wildlife-proof containers are used for all garbage)
- iv) evidence of a contract with a reputable waste hauler that is licensed by the community, region, or country

4.2 Water

Water Use and Management

4.2.1a

Criteria: The company has implemented a policy to conserve water and identifies areas where water can be reduced. It also measures the volume of potable water consumed on a monthly basis and ensures that water is sustainably sourced and does not adversely affect natural flows.

Objective: To establish a baseline of potable water used and key areas to reduce consumption.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) documented water conservation policy that pledges to reduce and conserve water consumption
- ii) monitoring and tracking report that includes the following:

a) report showing monthly water consumption by source and appropriate measurement unit (if water is purchased, include utility records; if on site wells are used, sample records of quantity of water used or record metered water consumption)

b) calculate total water consumption and normalize against most appropriate factor (e.g., # of transactions, etc.); frequency should be at least quarterly

iii) evidence that a water management plan pursuant to water stewardship goals has been implemented, and:

a) identifies key strategies for employees and customers to save water (e.g., educational signage for customers and employees, sweeping driveways and exterior grounds instead of using water, innovative uses of greywater, etc.)

b) designates an employee to monitor water consumption, water efficiency savings, and treatment activities and ensure other employees are aware of these activities

c) ensures that wastewater, including grey water, is effectively treated and is only reused or released safely, with no adverse effects to environmental flows

d) provides evidence of research of water risk in the destination

e) provides evidence water sourcing does not adversely affect on the local population or environment

f) provides evidence water stewardship goals are identified and pursued

iv) evidence of how plan is communicated to employees (e.g., email, letter, training materials with a list of participants)

Wastewater

4.2.2b

Criteria: The company ensures wastewater, including grey water, is effectively treated and is only reused or released safely.

Objective: To reduce water pollution by all means necessary.

Evaluation Guidelines:

i) wastewater is disposed of to a municipal treatment system if available

ii) if municipal treatment system is not available, there is a system in place onsite to treat wastewater that meet local, national, and/or international standards and ensures no adverse effects on the local population and the environment

4.3 Energy

Energy Use and Management

4.3.1a

Criteria: The company has implemented a policy to conserve energy and maximize renewable energy sources when available. It also measures the energy (e.g., electricity, natural gas) it uses for business operations on a monthly basis.

Objective: To establish a baseline of energy use and a framework for the reduction of energy use over time.

Evaluation Guidelines:

i) documented energy reduction and renewable policy that pledges to conserve energy and utilize renewable energy whenever available

ii) monitoring and tracking report that includes the following:

a) report of all energy use by type and unit of measurement (e.g., kWh/gallons/therms) for non-renewable electricity; natural gas or LPG; diesel or petroleum fuel; renewable energy (e.g., solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, small-scale hydro energy, or methane-based system)

b) report of energy utility costs

c) calculate total energy consumption and normalize against most appropriate factor (e.g., # transactions, etc.); frequency should be monthly

iii) evidence that an energy management plan has been implemented, that:

a) identifies key strategies for employees and customers to conserve energy (e.g. unplug charging devices, turn off all lights in unoccupied areas, etc.)

b) designates an employee to monitor energy consumption and energy efficiency activities and ensure other employees are aware of these activities

c) includes goals for energy reduction that are shared with key stakeholders including employees and customers

iv) evidence of how this plan is communicated to employees (e.g., email, letter, training materials with a list of participants)

4.4 Pollution

CO2 Emissions

4.4.1a

Criteria: The company has a policy to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from all significant sources. It also measures the total net annual GHG or CO2 equivalent emissions where possible.

Objective: To establish a baseline of GHG emissions or CO2 equivalent emissions and a framework for the reduction of emissions over time.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) CO2 emission reduction plan stating a commitment to reduce CO2 emissions
- ii) monitoring and tracking report of CO2 emissions that includes the following:
 - a) report from SMS using total energy use and employee commuter miles calculated for CO2e emissions or report from another CO2 calculator for direct and indirect emissions
 - b) calculate total CO2 emissions and normalize against most appropriate factor (e.g., # transactions, etc.); frequency should be quarterly
- iii) evidence that a CO2 emission reduction plan has been implemented, that:
 - a) identifies key strategies for employees and customers to conserve energy (e.g. unplug charging devices, turn off all lights in unoccupied areas, etc.)
 - b) designates an employee to monitor CO2 emissions and ensure other employees are aware of these activities
 - c) includes goals for energy reduction that are shared with key stakeholders including employees and customers
- iv) carbon offset mechanisms are used where practical

4.4.1b

Criteria: The company can demonstrate participation in a local, national, and/or international climate mitigation program.

Objective: To promote the reduction in GHG emissions through multiple strategies.

Evaluation Guidelines:

i) evidence that shows demonstration of formal carbon offset programs (e.g. The Verified Carbon Standard, The CDM Gold Standard, The Climate Action Reserve, The American Carbon Registry, The Plan Vivo Foundation, etc.)

or

ii) evidence that shows demonstration of participation in local programs that aim to reduce or offset carbon emissions (e.g. participation in Vail's climate action plan, investment in solar farm, etc.)

Sustainable Transportation

4.4.2a

Criteria: The company has made a pledge to reduce motorized vehicle usage related to transportation, and this is communicated to employees and customers.

Objective: To reduce transportation-related energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) transportation pledge stating the company will implement at least two of the following within the next one year and implement four or more within the next two years:
 - a) customers are given options for arrival and departures using low impact transport (if applicable);
 - b) tour routes are planned to minimize travel distances without compromising tour quality (if applicable);
 - c) fuel efficient vehicles are rented, purchased, or leased where available;
 - d) clients are advised to use public transport;
 - e) bikes are available for client use; employees are rewarded for using alternative transportation to get to work (e.g., carpooling, walking, biking, using public transport) and telecommuting and/or flexible scheduling is offered;
 - f) the company has a policy to promote activities, tours and experiences that incorporate human or animal powered travel.
- ii) evidence of implementation during onsite inspection

Pollution Prevention

4.4.3b

Criteria: The company has implemented a plan to reduce pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and air and soil contaminants, and it communicates this plan to employees.

Objective: To ensure the company is implementing practices to reduce all types of pollution.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) plan that includes a list of practices implemented by the company that meets the requirements of this criterion
- ii) evidence that these practices have been implemented (e.g., employee manual, lighting fixtures) and indicators of their success

Chemical Management System

4.4.4a

Criteria: The company trains all applicable employees in the safe and proper handling of chemicals. It also tracks all chemical cleaning supplies purchased, determines which are toxic/non-toxic and promotes biodegradable product use.

Objective: To increase awareness of cleaning chemicals purchased and reduce the amount of toxic chemicals in use or on site.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) list of employees who have participated in chemical handling training during the last period
- ii) an inventory of harmful substances has been made and material safety data sheets (MSDS) are held based on which chemicals are toxic and which are non-toxic
- iii) purchase of harmful substances is minimized and substituted when available
- iv) visitors are informed about personal use of substances which may be considered harmful to the local environment (such as toxic sunscreens and repellants)

5.0 Supply Chain Management

5.1 Purchasing Policies

Responsible Purchasing

5.1.1a

Criteria: The company has purchasing guidelines that give preference to sustainable and responsible sourcing of goods and services.

Objective: To encourage the purchase of local, fair-trade, and environmentally friendly goods and services.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) policy or guidelines that gives preference to sustainable and responsible sourcing of goods and services (e.g., when price and quality are comparable, local, fair-trade, and environmentally friendly products are purchased) and states the need to avoid purchase of products that are made from threatened or engendered species and products that are harmful to the environment, humans or animals (e.g., toxic paints, fuels, oils, paint removers, and detergents)
- ii) tracking records of all locally produced, fair-trade, and environmentally friendly products for at least one quarter
- iii) evidence that preference is given to local, fairtrade, and/or environmentally friendly products through purchasing of products with recognized certifications - notably with respect to wood, paper, food, and products from the wild
- iv) in selecting service providers preference is given to those companies that are locally owned/operated and have sustainability certification. Where certified businesses are not available, sustainability performance is considered and continuous improvement of service suppliers is encouraged

5.1.1b

Criteria: The company has a documented responsible purchasing clause within the procurement policy, and a dedicated staff member is in charge of implementing and monitoring the plan.

Objective: To establish and implement a responsible purchasing policy.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) policy is implemented and incorporates environmentally friendly purchasing, environmentally and socially responsible products and services, testing of new products, and defined purchasing targets
- ii) plan stipulates an employee has been designated to oversee the program
- iii) plan requires the evaluation of the program on a regular basis, and this review cycle, with specific dates, has been stipulated

6.0 Community and Ecosystem Impacts

6.1 Community and Heritage

Promoting Local Crafts, Community Groups, and Economic Development

6.1.1b

Criteria: The company has designated areas where authorized local organizations, artisans, and service vendors can exhibit/demonstrate/sell sustainable arts/crafts that are based on the area's nature, history, and culture.

Objective: To support local artisans, community-based organizations, and service vendors.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) exhibits or space specifically set aside for local artisans and community-based organizations to publicly display projects, culture, handicrafts and other community-based NGOs (e.g., displayed locally-produced pictures, decorations, handicrafts, etc.; agreements, etc.)
- ii) where appropriate, advice, support and partnerships with local entrepreneurs are considered and pursued

Local Access to Sites

6.1.2b

Criteria: The company ensures any acquisition of land, property, and or water rights are legal. In cases where communal and indigenous rights are concerned, acquisition requires free and informed consent and does not require involuntary resettlement.

Objective: To protect land owner's legal rights.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) evidence of legal purchases of land or property
- ii) documented evidence of access rights, consultations, and informed consent where applicable

Intellectual Property of Local Communities

6.1.3b

Criteria: The company values and incorporates authentic elements of traditional and contemporary local culture in its operations, design, decoration, cuisine, or shops, while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.

Objective: To protect the rights of local communities.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) evidence of traditional and contemporary culture incorporated into operations, design, decoration, cuisine, or shops
- ii) policy/statement that respects intellectual property rights and ensures necessary copyrights or permissions is necessary
- iii) evidence that views of the local community have been sought on the presentation of local cultural heritage

Visitation Practices

6.1.4b

Criteria: The company follows local, national, and international good practice for the management and promotion of culturally or historically sensitive sites. In cases where indigenous communities are visited, Criteria: The company follows agreed upon guidelines.

Objective: To minimize adverse impacts and maximize local benefits and visitor fulfillment.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) demonstrates awareness of, and compliance with, existing international, national and local good practice and guidance for tourist visits to cultural sites and indigenous communities
- ii) consideration is given to carrying capacity of sites and communities to determine group size and frequency of visits
- iii) evidence of supporting training or using local guides to the extent possible
- iv) evidence of collecting feedback from site managers and visitors is encouraged
- v) if applicable, evidence of engagement with indigenous communities/sites in reviewing guidance and creating and agreeing to additional guidelines as necessary including measures that avoid inappropriate interaction with children

Protecting Heritage Assets

6.1.5b

Criteria: The company has implemented a leave no trace ethos when visiting cultural, historical, and/or natural sites which includes the removal or extraction of cultural or historic structures and artifacts, and minimizing any disturbance to natural ecosystems.

Objective: To preserve local heritage for present and future generations.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) policy that is implemented and prohibits the removal, sale, trade or display of historic and archeological artifacts

- ii) evidence that any display, sale or trade of historical and archeological artifacts is permitted by national and/or international law
- iii) awareness of and compliance with, existing guidelines for tourist visits to natural sites
- iv) guidelines for conducting visits and informing customers
- v) collaboration with local organizations for improving tourism to natural and cultural heritage sites
- vi) consideration is given to carrying capacity of sites to determine group size and frequency of visits
- vii) evidence of supporting training or using local guides to the extent possible
- viii) evidence of collecting feedback from site managers and visitors is encouraged

6.2 Ecosystem Impacts

Protecting Threatened Species

6.2.1b

Criteria: The company has implemented a policy that ensures wildlife, including threatened or endangered species, are not commercialized, sold, traded, or displayed, except as permitted by law.

Objective: To ensure wildlife, including threatened or endangered species, are protected as permitted by law.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) access to list of local threatened and endangered species
- ii) policy that is implemented and prohibits the sale, trade or display of wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, except as permitted by law
- iii) evidence that any display, sale, or trade of wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, is permitted by law
- iv) evidence that, if these practices take place, it is part of a regulated activity (e.g. traditional ceremonies) that ensures their use is sustainable and in compliance with local and international laws
- v) visitors are informed of regulations concerning wildlife and/or plant harvesting (e.g. what is legally acceptable for hunting or foraging), consumption and trade and of the need to avoid buying illegal products/souvenirs derived from threatened species of wildlife notified by IUCN or CITES
- vi) where hunting activity is legal, it forms part of a scientifically based, properly managed and strictly enforced approach to conservation

Wildlife Disturbance

6.2.2b

Criteria: The company ensures its activities do not disturb free roaming wildlife and prohibits contact with protected, endangered, or dangerous wildlife taking into account cumulative impacts. This information is communicated to visitor, customers, and employees.

Objective: To ensure operations are low-impact and do not disturb wildlife.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) policy that meets the requirements of this criterion has been implemented and communicated to customers (e.g., employee training materials, signage, customer educational materials, etc.)
- ii) awareness of and compliance with existing local, national and international regulations and guidelines concerning wildlife interactions based on advice from wildlife experts
- iii) special attention is given to, but is not limited to: no artificial feeding of wildlife; secure storage of food and trash to avoid inadvertently feeding wild animals; no disturbing wildlife during mating season(s); no disturbing wildlife when nurturing their young

Wildlife Management

6.2.3b

Criteria: The company has implemented a policy not to keep wild animals in captivity unless they are involved in a recognized wildlife rehabilitation or reintroduction program as part of a properly regulated activity in compliance with local and international law, and are kept by those authorized and suitably equipped to house and care for them humanely. The company communicates this policy to its customers, employees and service providers as appropriate.

Objective: To ensure captive wildlife are given humane conditions and their welfare is a priority issue.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) policy that meets the requirements of this criterion has been implemented and communicated to customers (e.g., employee training materials, customer educational materials, etc.)
- ii) awareness of and compliance with relevant laws and regulations concerning captive wildlife and animal welfare
- iii) guidelines for specific tourism activities involving captive wildlife are implemented if applicable
- iv) housing, care, and handling of all wild and domestic animals meets the highest standards of animal welfare including having licensed professionals and regular inspections

Non-Invasive Species

6.2.4b

Criteria: The company takes necessary steps to identify local noxious weeds and avoids the introduction or transporting of non-native cultivated plants that could become noxious.

Objective: To proactively avoid the introduction or transporting of invasive species.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) access to noxious weeds list from state and county websites
- ii) list of actions taken to avoid introduction of invasive alien species and evidence that these have been communicated to employees

Native Landscaping

6.2.5b

Criteria: The company uses native species for all landscaping and restoration.

Objective: To protect and enhance native ecology.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) evidence of the use of native species for landscaping and restoration

6.3 Giving Back

Giving Back Programs

6.3.1a

Criteria: The company actively supports initiatives for natural resource conservation, local infrastructure, and social community development through outreach to customers, financial philanthropy, volunteerism, and/or other support.

Objective: To support local socio-economic and conservation Initiatives.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) pledge to provide philanthropic materials to customers related to education, training, health & sanitation, protected areas, and/or climate change and encourage them to participate
- ii) the level and nature of the contributions is recorded
- iii) in selecting service providers preference is given to those companies that support socio-economic and conservation initiatives

Biodiversity Conservation

6.3.2b

Criteria: The company supports and contributes to biodiversity conservation.

Objective: To preserve biodiversity for present and future generations.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) awareness of natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value. If these areas happen to exist onsite, evidence of appropriate management
- ii) evidence of monetary donations or in-kind support to conservation organizations
- iii) evidence that measures were taken to avoid disturbance to wildlife, their habitats, or natural ecosystems and that, in cases where any disturbance of natural ecosystems exists, such disturbance is rehabilitated or compensation is paid

Heritage Sites

6.3.3b

Criteria: The company contributes to the protection, preservation, and enhancement of local properties, sites and traditions of historical, archaeological, cultural and spiritual significance and does not impeded access to them by local residents.

Objective: To preserve properties, sites, and traditions for present and future generations.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) records of monetary contributions and/or in-kind support to the protection of cultural heritage
- ii) evidence provisions are made for local access to sites if applicable

Volunteerism

6.3.4b

Criteria: The company's full time salaried staff actively participate in volunteer activities and can document the time spent volunteering is at least 1% of total employee hours.

Objective: To further support local sustainable development projects and NGOs.

- i) system that is implemented to provide employees opportunities to donate time to volunteer-based projects that contribute to the protection and/or enhancement of socio-economic development, infrastructure, natural and cultural heritage, and/or biodiversity conservation
- ii) evidence of projects offered (e.g., research, preservation of heritage sites, rehabilitation of natural areas, etc.)
- iii) list and number of employees who have volunteered their time and the number of hours each volunteered, as a proportion of total hours worked
- iv) calculation of the number of volunteer hours versus and the total number of working hours for all employees

7.0 Customer Communications

7.1 Marketing and Feedback

Marketing

7.1.1a

Criteria: The company promotes the principles of sustainability through its marketing materials and web site.

Objective: To enhance customer understanding of sustainability.

Evaluation Guidelines:

i) evidence of how Criteria: The company is promoting the principles of sustainability (e.g., links to websites, marketing materials, etc.)

7.1.1b

Criteria: The company's promotional and marketing communications are accurate and transparent, and do not over promise in their description of the services or sustainability credentials of the company.

Objective: To ensure marketing materials are accurate.

Evaluation Guidelines:

i) copy of promotional and marketing communications and/or website

ii) evidence of accurate descriptions and do not promise sightings or experiences which cannot be guaranteed

iii) evidence of accurate description of eco-labels and/or certifications listed on company website

Use of Feedback

7.1.2a

Criteria: The company collects customer feedback and has a system for documenting the feedback and addressing corrective actions.

Objective: To establish a system to monitor customer feedback and satisfaction with the quality of experience and/or sustainability.

Evaluation Guidelines:

i) customer feedback survey

ii) record of the number of feedback forms returned annually as a percentage of the total transactions

- iii) record of negative feedback
- iv) record of the corrective actions taken
- v) feedback from customers is provided to businesses and destinations contracted/visited (if applicable)

7.2 Customer Education

Responsible Travel

7.2.1a

Criteria: The company communicates to customers interpretative information and appropriate behavior that includes responsible travel, natural and cultural heritage, and protected areas

Objective: To encourage customer understanding of how to travel responsibly and increase awareness of behavior appropriate to the surrounding area and related attraction sites.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) interpretation related to responsible travel, natural and cultural heritage, and protected areas
- ii) applicable staff are trained and follow international
- iii) evidence that the code of conduct for appropriate behavior is being communicated to customers (e.g., website, posted sign, brochure)

Customer Education Regarding Sustainability

7.2.1b

Criteria: The company has designed a program to raise customer awareness of sustainability issues related to the company's operations, its service providers, and responsible travel.

Objective: To raise customer sustainability consciousness.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- i) documented customer education program (e.g., posters, in room materials, tour briefing, etc.) addressing at least four of the following:
 - a) sustainability goals related to operations
 - b) sustainability practices related to tour activities
 - c) waste and recycling
 - d) water management
 - e) energy management and greenhouse gases

f) responsible purchasing

g) ecosystem impacts

h) community impacts

ii) evidence that the key staff are aware of the program and able to communicate topics to customers

Buy Local

7.2.2a

Criteria: The company's customers are encouraged to buy locally made products and patron other local businesses committed to sustainability.

Objective: To support the local economy and offset loss of local revenues through importing.

Evaluation Guidelines:

i) local community and economic development pledge