



# **GSTC Destination Criteria**

**Version 2.0  
6 December 2019**

with  
**Performance indicators and SDGs**

Formally endorsed by the GSTC International Standards Working Group and formally adopted by the GSTC Board of Directors as the first revision of the GSTC Destination Criteria per the terms of the GSTC Bylaws

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## Preamble

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Criteria were created to provide a common understanding of sustainable tourism. The GSTC Destinations Criteria – known informally also as “GSTC-D” -- are the minimum that any tourism destination should aspire to reach. They are organized around four main themes: sustainable management; socio-economic impacts; cultural impacts; and environmental impacts. They have applicability to the entire tourism sector.

The GSTC Criteria have been developed and revised while striving to adhere to the Standard-Setting Code of the ISEAL Alliance, the body recognized to provide guidance on international norms for developing sustainability standards in all sectors. The most recent revision of the GSTC-D took place in 2019 and was based on two rounds of stakeholder consultation. Information on the development of the criteria and plans for future revisions are available on [www.gstccouncil.org](http://www.gstccouncil.org).

## What are the Criteria for?

Some of the uses of the GSTC Destination Criteria include the following:

- Serve as the basis for certification for sustainability
- Serve as basic guidelines for destinations that wish to become more sustainable
- Help consumers identify sound sustainable tourism destinations
- Serve as a common denominator for information media to recognize destinations and inform the public regarding their sustainability
- Help certification and other voluntary destination level programs ensure that their standards meet a broadly accepted baseline
- Offer governmental, non-governmental, and private sector programs a starting point for developing sustainable tourism requirements
- Serve as basic guidelines for education and training bodies, such as tourism schools and universities
- Demonstrate leadership that inspires others to act.

The Criteria indicate what should be done, not how to do it or whether the goal has been achieved. This role is fulfilled by performance indicators, associated educational materials, and access to tools for implementation, all of which are an indispensable complement to the GSTC Criteria.

## To whom do the Criteria apply?

The GSTC-D have been designed for destinations<sup>1</sup>. The criteria do not relate to a single body but rather to a named place that can be uniquely identified. The criteria simply require that the condition described pertains in that destination, irrespective of what body may be responsible for it or how or by whom any related action is implemented.

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<sup>1</sup> A destination has been defined by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) as: “A physical space with or without administrative and/or analytical boundaries in which a visitor can spend an overnight. It is the cluster (co-location) of products and services, and of activities and experiences along the tourism value chain and a basic unit of analysis of tourism. A destination incorporates various stakeholders and can network to form larger destinations”.

The scope of the GSTC-D is broad and the Criteria can be applied to a wide range of destinations. They may be in any part of the world and of any type (e.g. urban, rural, mountain, coastal or mixed). The criteria can relate to large destinations (e.g. sizeable cities or regions) and to small ones (e.g. national parks, clusters of local communities, etc.).

While the GSTC-D relate to the place, not to a body, many of the criteria may nevertheless be taken up by and applied through a destination management organisation which is responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism within the destination. The existence of such an organisation is a central requirement of the GSTC-D, as stipulated in Criterion A1. It should be noted that such an organisation is not necessarily a local authority or public sector body and requires the involvement of both the public and private sector.

Some of the criteria refer to enterprises. These may be individual businesses but they may also be other forms of facility, operation and undertaking. For example they could include museums, festivals, public buildings and monuments, not only commercial businesses such as hotels or paid attractions.

### **Performance indicators and SDGs**

The performance indicators presented here are designed to provide guidance in measuring compliance with the criteria. They are not intended to be the definitive set or all-inclusive, but to provide a solid sample set for users of the GSTC C-D in developing their own indicator sets. The performance indicators essentially provide a suggested list of circumstances, factors, evidence and actions to be looked for in a destination in assessing compliance with the criteria.

Application of the criteria will help a destination to contribute towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Against each of the criteria, one or more of the 17 SDGs is identified, to which it most closely relates.

### **Language and Translations**

English is the official language of the GSTC Criteria and its related system.

Translations into other languages appearing on the GSTC website or elsewhere are to be used for training and awareness purposes and are not authorized for usage in technical programs including certification and accreditation except where specifically stipulated by formal agreement between the GSTC or its authorized Accreditation Body and the standard owner and/or Certification Body. In the case of authorized usage of a language other than English, any doubt regarding interpretation of the Criteria shall revert to the official English language version.

### **Transition period**

The transition periods for replacing GSTC Destination Criteria v1.0 with v2.0 are based on function, as follows:

- For purposes of policy-setting, training, and any other purposes not related to certification, v2.0 should be used with immediate effect
- Owners of GSTC-Recognized destination/community standards shall have a period of two years to comply with the new v2.0, up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021. Owners may wish to adapt their standard to the revisions earlier, but should do so no later than June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, to allow time for any necessary adjustments per GSTC's review of the compliance of those changes.
- Certification Bodies that were accredited to certify destinations to GSTC Destination Criteria v1.0 must have the revised v2.0 fully integrated into the certification system with evidence of past application of it by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Their normal maintenance of accredited status shall not be delayed during the transition period. New applicants for Accreditation after December 2019 must ensure that they are using GSTC-D v2.0, or a GSTC-Recognized standard that is equivalent to v2.0, prior to submitting an application for Accreditation.

### Revisions to the GSTC Criteria

This version (v2.0) has been formally adopted by the Board of the Directors as the definitive version of the GSTC Destination Criteria (GSTC-D), as from 6 December 2019.

This version of the GSTC Destination Criteria (v2.0) is the 1<sup>st</sup> revision since their December 2013 formal release.

GSTC shall conduct periodic reviews of no less than five years after the previous revision to determine whether the current version remains relevant and whether and when a formal revision process should commence. The next such review shall likely take place approximately December 2024. GSTC welcomes comment on the Criteria at any time via the Criteria section of [www.gstcouncil.org](http://www.gstcouncil.org). Should comments provide evidence of need to conduct a review earlier than December 2024, GSTC may conduct a review at an earlier date.

### The structure of the criteria

The criteria are in four sections, each with two or three sub-sections, as shown below. The order of the sections and sub-sections in no way indicates the relative importance of each topic.

<p><b>SECTION A: Sustainable management</b></p> <p>A(a) Management structure and framework</p> <p>A(b) Stakeholder engagement</p> <p>A(c) Managing pressure and change</p>	<p><b>SECTION C: Cultural sustainability</b></p> <p>C(a) Protecting cultural heritage</p> <p>C(b) Visiting cultural sites</p>
<p><b>SECTION B: Socio-economic sustainability</b></p> <p>B(a) Delivering local economic benefits</p> <p>B(b) Social wellbeing and impacts</p>	<p><b>SECTION D: Environmental sustainability</b></p> <p>D(a) Conservation of natural heritage</p> <p>D(b) Resource management</p> <p>D(c) Management of waste and emissions</p>

## GSTC DESTINATION CRITERIA v2.0

Criteria	Indicators	SDGs
<b>SECTION A: Sustainable management</b>		
<b><u>A(a) Management structure and framework</u></b>		
<p><b>A1 Destination management responsibility</b></p> <p>The destination has an effective organization, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism, with involvement by the private sector, public sector and civil society. This group has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of socio- economic, cultural and environmental issues. The group is adequately funded, works with a range of bodies in delivering destination management, has access to sufficient staffing (including personnel with experience in sustainability) and follows principles of sustainability and transparency in its operations and transactions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Documentary evidence showing relevant make-up and responsibilities of the group.</li> <li>b. A financial plan and budget showing current and future funding sources.</li> <li>c. Evidence of links and engagement with other bodies.</li> <li>d. Records of permanent staff and contracted personnel, indicating relevant experience.</li> <li>e. Management guidelines and processes, which demonstrate awareness and adherence to sustainability principles and transparency in operations and letting of contracts.</li> </ul>	 
<p><b>A2 Destination management strategy and action plan</b></p> <p>The destination has established and is implementing a multi-year destination management strategy and action plan that is publicly available, is suited to its scale, was developed with stakeholder engagement and is based on sustainability principles. The strategy includes an identification and assessment of tourism assets and considers socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and risks. The strategy relates to and influences wider sustainable development policy and action in the destination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A published document setting out the current destination strategy and action.</li> <li>b. The strategy/plan clearly visible and available on-line.</li> <li>c. Evidence of stakeholder consultation, meetings etc. in developing the plan.</li> <li>d. Reference to sustainability principles and an assessment of assets, issues and risks, contained in the strategy and action plan.</li> <li>e. Specific references in the strategy/action plan to wider sustainable development policy (including pursuit of the SDGs), and vice versa.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>A3 Monitoring and reporting</b></p> <p>The destination is implementing a system to monitor and respond to socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and impacts arising from tourism. Actions and outcomes are regularly monitored, evaluated and publicly reported. The monitoring system is periodically reviewed.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific quantifiable socio-economic, cultural and environmental indicators and targets identified.</li> <li>Measurement against these indicators, with results recorded and publicised at least annually.</li> <li>Written evidence of monitoring and reporting of actions and outcomes.</li> <li>Previous reviews of monitoring system and schedule for future reviews.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>A(b) Stakeholder engagement</b></p>		
<p><b>A4 Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards</b></p> <p>The destination regularly informs tourism-related enterprises about sustainability issues and encourages and supports them in making their operations more sustainable. The destination promotes the adoption of sustainability standards, promoting the application of GSTC-I Recognized standards and GSTC-I Accredited certification schemes for tourism enterprises, where available. The destination publicizes a list of sustainability certified enterprises.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of regular communication of sustainability issues to tourism-related businesses (Media, meetings, direct contact etc.).</li> <li>Sustainability support and advice to tourism-related business – available and promoted.</li> <li>Number and percentage of businesses certified against tourism sustainability standards (and whether GSTC recognised/accredited), with targets for wider outreach.</li> <li>Evidence of promotion of certification schemes.</li> <li>List of tourism-related certified enterprises, kept up to date.</li> </ol>	 
<p><b>A5 Resident engagement and feedback</b></p> <p>The destination enables and promotes public participation in sustainable destination planning and management. Local communities' aspirations, concerns and satisfaction with tourism sustainability and destination management are regularly monitored and publicly reported, and action is taken in response to them. The destination has a system to enhance local understanding of sustainable tourism opportunities and challenges and to build the capacity of communities to respond.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of the promotion and facilitation of public participation in destination planning/management.</li> <li>Information on the type and level of such participation.</li> <li>Surveys of residents and other systematic feedback mechanisms, covering tourism issues.</li> <li>Evidence of action taken in response to residents' feedback.</li> <li>Programme of information, education and training on tourism provided for residents.</li> </ol>	 

<p><b>A6 Visitor engagement and feedback</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor and publicly report visitor satisfaction with the quality and sustainability of the destination experience and, if necessary, to take action in response. Visitors are informed about sustainability issues in the destination and the part that they can play in addressing them.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitor surveys (and other feedback mechanisms) – carried out and reported.</li> <li>Surveys and feedback includes visitor reaction to sustainability issues.</li> <li>Evidence of actions taken in response to visitor survey/feedback findings.</li> <li>Examples of visitor information that covers sustainability issues and how to respond to them.</li> </ol>	 
<p><b>A7 Promotion and information</b></p> <p>Promotion and visitor information material about the destination is accurate with regard to its products, services, and sustainability claims. Marketing messages and other communications reflect the destination’s values and approach to sustainability and treat local communities and natural and cultural assets with respect.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current information and promotional material with appropriate content.</li> <li>A process exists for checking the accuracy and appropriateness of destination promotion and information.</li> <li>Evidence of consultation with local communities and environmental and cultural bodies on communications content and delivery.</li> </ol>	 
<p><b><u>A(c) Managing pressure and change</u></b></p>		
<p><b>A8 Managing visitor volumes and activities</b></p> <p>The destination has a system for visitor management which is regularly reviewed. Action is taken to monitor and manage the volume and activities of visitors, and to reduce or increase them as necessary at certain times and in certain locations, working to balance the needs of the local economy, community, cultural heritage and environment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The destination management strategy and action plan addresses seasonality and spread of visitation.</li> <li>Variation in visitor volumes throughout the year is monitored, including in the most visited locations.</li> <li>Impacts of visitor volumes and activities are identified through observation and community and stakeholder feedback.</li> <li>Actions taken to manage visitor flows and impacts.</li> <li>Marketing strategy and selection of target markets takes account of visit patterns, the impact of activities and destination needs.</li> </ol>	 
<p><b>A9 Planning regulations and development control</b></p> <p>The destination has planning guidelines, regulations and/or policies which control the location and nature of development, require</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific policies/regulations/ guidelines which control development – documented and identified by title and date.</li> </ol>	

<p>environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impact assessment and integrate sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition. Regulations also apply to operations, including property rental and concessions for tourism purposes. The guidelines, regulations and policies were created with public participation and are widely communicated and enforced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Impact assessment requirements are set out, covering environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impacts, at sufficient scale to address long term issues for the destination.</li> <li>c. Specific regulations on property rental and operation for tourism, with evidence of their application and enforcement.</li> <li>d. Evidence of public participation in the development of policies/regulations/guidelines.</li> <li>e. Evidence of consultation with, and consent from indigenous people or minority ethnic groups when tourism development has been proposed or has occurred in their territories.</li> <li>f. Evidence of communication and enforcement of the policies/regulations/guidance, at planning, development and implementation stages.</li> </ul>	 
<p><b>A10 Climate change adaptation</b></p> <p>The destination identifies risks and opportunities associated with climate change. Climate change adaptation strategies are pursued for the siting, design, development and management of tourism facilities. Information on predicted climate change, associated risks and future conditions is provided for-residents, businesses and visitors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The destination management strategy and action plan identifies and addresses climate issues.</li> <li>b. Regulations, guidelines and zoning for tourism development and activities accommodate the consequences of climate change.</li> <li>c. A climate risk assessment, covering current and future risks – undertaken and made publicly available.</li> <li>d. Evidence of consideration of impact on, and contribution of, local ecosystems to climate change adaptation.</li> <li>e. Information on climate change that has been made publicly available.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>A11 Risk and crisis management</b></p> <p>The destination has a risk reduction, crisis management and emergency response plan that is appropriate to the destination. Key elements are communicated to residents, visitors, and enterprises. Procedures and resources are established for implementing the plan and it is regularly updated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A documented risk reduction, crisis management and emergency response plan for tourism in the destination.</li> <li>b. The plan recognises a wide range of risks, including natural disasters, terrorism, health, resource depletion, and others appropriate to the location.</li> <li>c. Communication procedures identified for use during and after an emergency.</li> <li>d. Programme for local delivery of information and training on risk and crisis management.</li> </ul>	 

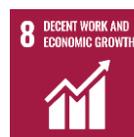
**SECTION B: Socio-economic sustainability**

**B(a) Delivering local economic benefits**

**B1 Measuring the economic contribution of tourism**

The direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism to the destination's economy is monitored and publicly reported. Appropriate measures may include levels of visitor volume, visitor expenditure, employment and investment and evidence on the distribution of economic benefits.

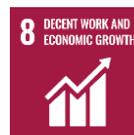
- a. Programme of economic data gathering.
- b. Annual reports on the direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism in the destination.
- c. Data covering a range of measures of economic impact (e.g. volume, expenditure, employment, investment and spread of economic benefit in the destination).



**B2 Decent work and career opportunities**

The destination encourages and supports career opportunities and training in tourism. The destination's tourism enterprises commit to providing equality of opportunity for local employment, training and advancement, a safe and secure working environment, and a living wage for all.

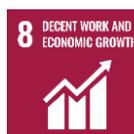
- a. Provision of relevant skills training programmes/courses, available locally.
- b. Statements of commitment by tourism enterprises to the provision of decent work/ career opportunities.
- c. Training and employment opportunities promoted to and taken up by local people, including women, young people, minorities and people with disabilities.
- d. Channels for checking working conditions and receiving/handling grievances (e.g. involvement of labour unions).



**B3 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade**

The destination encourages the retention of tourism spending in the local economy through supporting local enterprises, supply chains and sustainable investment. It promotes the development and purchase of local sustainable products based on fair trade principles and that reflect the area's nature

- a. Advice, finance or other support – available in the destination for tourism-related SMEs.
- b. Assistance with market access for local tourism-related SMEs.
- c. Action to encourage and assist local tourism enterprises to purchase goods and services locally.



<p>and culture. These may include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.</p>	<p>d. Initiatives to help local farmers, artisans and food producers to engage in the tourism value chain. e. Local produce and crafts identified, promoted and available for sale to visitors in the destination.</p>	
<p><b><u>B(b) Social wellbeing and impacts</u></b></p>		
<p><b>B4 Support for community</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives in a responsible manner.</p>	<p>a. Support for local community and sustainability initiatives by local tourism enterprises is encouraged and facilitated. b. Schemes exist, and are promoted, for visitors to support local community and sustainability initiatives. c. Volunteering and engagement with the community does not involve intrusion or exploitation.</p>	 
<p><b>B5 Preventing exploitation and discrimination</b></p> <p>The destination upholds international standards on human rights. It has laws, practices and an established code of conduct to prevent and report on human trafficking, modern slavery and commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation, discrimination and harassment of or against anyone, particularly children, adolescents, women, LGBT and other minorities. The laws and established practices are publicly communicated and enforced.</p>	<p>a. Reference (title, date) to specific laws that pertain in the destination regarding human rights, exploitation, discrimination and harassment. b. Evidence of communication and enforcement of above laws and related good practice (including to tourism enterprises and visitors). c. Risk and impact analysis regarding human rights, including human trafficking, modern slavery and child labour – conducted regularly. d. Destination and key tourism players are signatories to the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.</p>	 
<p><b>B6 Property and user rights</b></p> <p>Laws and regulations regarding property rights and acquisitions are documented and enforced. They comply with communal and indigenous rights, ensure public consultation and do not authorize resettlement without free prior and informed consent and fair and just compensation. Laws and regulations also protect user and access rights to key resources.</p>	<p>a. Reference (title, date) to specific laws that pertain in the destination regarding property rights and acquisitions and user and access rights to resources. b. Reference in the above laws to communal and indigenous rights, public consultation and resettlement. c. Evidence of enforcement of the above laws in the context of tourism development and activity.</p>	 

	<p>d. Evidence of community consultation, consent and compensation.</p>	
<p><b>B7 Safety and security</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards that addresses the needs of both visitors and residents.</p>	<p>a. Security and health services are well established and active in the destination.</p> <p>b. The needs of visitors are identified and addressed in the delivery of security and health services.</p> <p>c. Tourism facilities are inspected for compliance with safety and hygiene standards.</p>	 
<p><b>B8 Access for all</b></p> <p>Where practical, sites, facilities and services, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements or other special needs. Where sites and facilities are not immediately accessible, access is afforded through the design and implementation of solutions that take into account both the integrity of the site and such reasonable accommodations for persons with access requirements as can be achieved. Information is made available on the accessibility of sites, facilities and services.</p>	<p>a. The existence of any regulations and standards regarding the accessibility of visitor sites, facilities and services.</p> <p>b. Consistent application of accessibility standards in public facilities.</p> <p>c. Data on the extent/proportion of visitor sites and facilities that are accessible.</p> <p>d. Evidence of programmes to improve access for people with a range of access needs.</p> <p>e. Information on accessibility included in communications about the destination as a whole.</p> <p>f. Details of accessibility included in visitor information about key sites.</p>	 

<b>SECTION C: Cultural sustainability</b>		
<b><u>C(a) Protecting cultural heritage</u></b>		
<p><b>C1 Protection of cultural assets</b></p> <p>The destination has a policy and system to evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve cultural assets, including built heritage and cultural landscapes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Lists of cultural assets, including evaluation and indication of vulnerability.</li> <li>b. Programme of rehabilitation and conservation of assets.</li> <li>c. Mechanisms for using income from tourism to support conservation of cultural assets.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>C2 Cultural artefacts</b></p> <p>The destination has laws governing the proper sale, trade, display, or gifting of historical and archaeological artefacts. The laws are enforced and publicly communicated, including to tourism enterprises and visitors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reference to relevant laws relating to historical artefacts pertaining in the destination (title, date).</li> <li>b. Evidence of communication of relevant laws to tourism enterprises and visitors.</li> <li>c. Evidence of enforcement of relevant laws.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>C3 Intangible heritage</b></p> <p>The destination supports the celebration and protection of intangible cultural heritage, including local traditions, arts, music, language, gastronomy and other aspects of local identity and distinctiveness. The presentation, replication and interpretation of living culture and traditions is sensitive and respectful, seeks to involve and benefit local communities, and provides visitors with an authentic and genuine experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identification and listing of intangible cultural heritage.</li> <li>b. Examples of celebration and visitor experiences of intangible cultural heritage (events, distinctive products etc.).</li> <li>c. Evidence of involvement of local and indigenous communities in developing and delivering visitor experiences based on intangible cultural heritage.</li> <li>d. Feedback from visitors and local communities on delivery of intangible heritage experiences.</li> </ul>	 
<p><b>C4 Traditional access</b></p> <p>The destination monitors, protects, and when necessary rehabilitates or restores local community access to natural and cultural sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Monitoring of accessibility to natural and cultural sites for the local community.</li> <li>b. Evidence of engagement with the local community regarding traditional access.</li> <li>c. Specific action to protect and/or rehabilitate local community access.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>C5 Intellectual property</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to contribute to the protection and preservation of intellectual property rights of communities and individuals.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reference to laws on intellectual property pertaining in the destination (title, date).</li> <li>Communication of intellectual property rights to tourism stakeholders.</li> <li>Evidence that intellectual property rights are protected in the development of cultural experiences for visitors.</li> </ol>	
<p><b><u>C(b) Visiting cultural sites</u></b></p>		
<p><b>C6 Visitor management at cultural sites</b></p> <p>The destination has a system for the management of visitors within and around cultural sites, which takes account of their characteristics, capacity and sensitivity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimize adverse impacts. Guidelines for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites and cultural events are made available to visitors, tour operators and guides before and at the time of the visit.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring of visitor flows and impact on cultural sites, with results shared across the destination.</li> <li>Evidence of action to manage tourism-related impacts in or around cultural sites.</li> <li>Existence and distribution of published guidelines on visitor behaviour at sensitive sites and cultural events and periodic monitoring of compliance.</li> <li>A code of practice for tour operators and tour guides and/or other engagement with them on visitor management at cultural sites.</li> <li>Provision of training for guides.</li> </ol>	 
<p><b>C7 Site interpretation</b></p> <p>Accurate interpretative material is provided which informs visitors of the significance of the cultural and natural aspects of the sites they visit. The information is culturally appropriate, developed with host community collaboration, and clearly communicated in languages pertinent to visitors and residents.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of informative interpretative material on site and in formats that are accessible pre-arrival.</li> <li>Evidence that interpretative material has been well researched and is accurate.</li> <li>Interpretation material that identifies the significance and sensitivity/fragility of sites.</li> <li>Evidence of host community collaboration in preparation of relevant interpretative material.</li> <li>Interpretative material available in relevant languages.</li> </ol>	 

<b>SECTION D: Environmental sustainability</b>		
<b><u>D(a) Conservation of natural heritage</u></b>		
<p><b>D1 Protection of sensitive environments</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor, measure and respond to the impacts of tourism on the natural environment, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. List of natural heritage sites and assets, indicating type, conservation status and vulnerability.</li> <li>b. Programmes to conserve biodiversity and natural heritage.</li> <li>c. Programmes to eradicate and control invasive species.</li> <li>d. Action to identify, monitor and mitigate tourism impacts on biodiversity and natural heritage.</li> <li>e. Mechanisms for using income from tourism to support conservation of natural assets.</li> <li>f. Communications with visitors and enterprises on reducing spread of alien species.</li> </ul>	 
<p><b>D2 Visitor management at natural sites</b></p> <p>The destination has a system for the management of visitors within and around natural sites, which takes account of their characteristics, capacity and sensitivity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimize adverse impacts. Guidelines for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites are made available to visitors, tour operators and guides before and at the time of the visit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Monitoring of visitor flows and impact on natural sites, with results shared across the destination.</li> <li>b. Evidence of action to manage and mitigate tourism-related impacts in or around natural sites.</li> <li>c. Existence and distribution of published guidelines on visitor behaviour at sensitive sites, and periodic monitoring of compliance.</li> <li>d. A code of practice for tour operators and tour guides and/or other engagement with them on visitor management at natural sites.</li> <li>e. Cooperation with local conservation bodies to identify environmental risks associated with tourism and measures to reduce them.</li> <li>f. Provision of training for guides.</li> </ul>	 
<p><b>D3 Wildlife interaction</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for wildlife interactions. Interactions with free roaming wildlife, taking into account cumulative impacts, are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse impacts on the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reference (title, date) to international, national and local laws that apply in the destination regarding interaction with wildlife.</li> <li>b. Endorsement of international standards for wildlife viewing for both marine and terrestrial species.</li> </ul>	

<p>animals concerned and on the viability and behaviour of populations in the wild.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Distribution of a code of practice for wildlife interaction, including viewing, which reflects international standards.</li> <li>d. System for checking compliance with regulations, and code of practice amongst tourism operations.</li> <li>e. Actions to monitor wildlife wellbeing and minimize disturbance, in locations where interactions occur.</li> <li>f. Provision of information to visitors on harmful wildlife interaction, such as touching and feeding.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>D4 Species exploitation and animal welfare</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards that seek to ensure animal welfare and conservation of species (animals, plants and all living organisms). This includes the harvesting or capture, trade, display, and sale of wildlife species and their products. No species of wild animal is acquired, bred or held captive, except by authorized and suitably equipped persons and for properly regulated activities. Housing, care and handling of all wild and domestic animals meets the highest standards of animal welfare.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reference (title, date) to specific international, national and local laws, standards and guidelines that apply in the destination regarding animal welfare and conservation of species.</li> <li>b. Notification of laws, standards and guidelines to tourism enterprises and guides.</li> <li>c. A system for inspection of the conditions of captive wildlife and domestic animals, including their housing and handling.</li> <li>d. Licensing and checking of qualifications of personnel responsible for captive wildlife.</li> <li>e. Action to promote the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in the tourism sector and to ensure compliance with it.</li> <li>f. Provision of information to visitors on avoiding trade in endangered species, e.g. in purchase of souvenirs derived from threatened species of wildlife notified by IUCN or CITES.</li> <li>g. Enforcement of legislation to ensure that any hunting activity is part of a scientifically based, properly managed and strictly enforced approach to conservation.</li> </ul>	 

<b><u>D(b) Resource management</u></b>		
<p><b>D5 Energy conservation</b></p> <p>The destination has targets to reduce energy consumption, improve efficiency in its use, as well as increase the use of renewable energy. The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report their contribution to these targets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Energy consumption targets are publicised and promoted.</li> <li>b. Programme to increase energy efficiency – e.g. promoting and supporting insulation.</li> <li>c. Investment in renewable energy and percent of total provision/consumption.</li> <li>d. Support and incentives for energy monitoring and reduction by enterprises.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>D6 Water stewardship</b></p> <p>The destination encourages enterprises to measure, monitor, publicly report and manage water usage. Water risk in the destination is assessed and documented. In cases of high water risk, water stewardship goals are identified and actively pursued with enterprises, to ensure that tourism use does not conflict with the needs of local communities and ecosystems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provision of guidance and support for monitoring and reduction of water usage by enterprises.</li> <li>b. Program to regularly assess water risk.</li> <li>c. Setting, publication and enforcement of water stewardship goals, where water risk has been assessed as high.</li> <li>d. Monitoring and control of sources and volume of water used for tourism purposes and its effect on local communities and ecosystems. Promotion and checking of adherence to goals by tourism enterprises.</li> <li>e. Visitor information on water risk and minimising water use.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>D7 Water quality</b></p> <p>The destination monitors water quality for drinking, recreational and ecological purposes using quality standards. The monitoring results are publicly available, and the destination has a system to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Programme of water quality monitoring.</li> <li>b. Existence of data and reports on water quality.</li> <li>c. Monitoring bathing water, with certification and identification of sites reaching set standards.</li> <li>d. Evidence of actions to improve water quality.</li> <li>e. Information for visitors on quality of local drinking water, to encourage use as alternative to bottled water.</li> </ul>	 

<b><u>D(c) Management of waste and emissions</u></b>		
<p><b>D8 Wastewater</b></p> <p>The destination has clear and enforced guidelines in place for the siting, maintenance and testing of discharge from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems. The destination ensures that wastes are properly treated and reused or released safely without adverse impacts on the local population and the environment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Written guidelines and regulations on wastewater treatment.</li> <li>b. System of enforcing guidelines amongst enterprises.</li> <li>c. Monitoring/testing of released wastewater.</li> <li>d. Provision of sustainable municipal water treatment systems, for use by the tourism sector, where practical and appropriate.</li> </ol>	 
<p><b>D9 Solid waste</b></p> <p>The destination measures and reports on its generation of waste and sets targets for its reduction. It ensures solid waste is properly treated and diverted from landfill, with provision of a multiple-stream collection and recycling system which effectively separates waste by type. The destination encourages enterprises to avoid, reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste, including food waste. Action is taken to eliminate or reduce single-use items, especially plastics. Any residual solid waste that is not reused or recycled is disposed of safely and sustainably.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Waste monitoring programme, with results and targets published.</li> <li>b. Coordinated campaign/advice/support with tourism enterprises on waste management, including food waste.</li> <li>c. Campaign to reduce/eliminate single use items, especially plastics.</li> <li>d. Waste management programme for public offices and facilities.</li> <li>e. Provision of a collection and recycling system, with at least four streams (i.e. organic, paper, metal, glass and plastic).</li> <li>f. Provision of sustainable system for disposal of residual waste.</li> <li>g. Campaign to eliminate dropping of litter, including by visitors, and to keep public spaces clean.</li> <li>h. Adequate bins for separated waste disposal.</li> </ol>	  
<p><b>D10 GHG emissions and climate change mitigation</b></p> <p>The destination has targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and implements and reports on mitigation policies and actions. Enterprises are encouraged to measure, monitor, reduce or minimise, publicly report and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including from suppliers and service providers). Offsetting of any remaining emissions is encouraged.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Published target for percentage of emissions reduction by specified date.</li> <li>b. Annual climate report, including monitoring and mitigation actions.</li> <li>c. Supported campaign or other engagement with tourism enterprises on reduction and mitigation of emissions.</li> <li>d. Action to reduce emissions from public sector operations.</li> <li>e. Information for enterprises and visitors on offsetting schemes that meet recognised standards.</li> </ol>	

<p><b>D11 Low-impact transportation</b></p> <p>The destination has targets to reduce transport emissions from travel to and within the destination. An increase in the use of sustainable, low-emissions vehicles and public transport and active travel (e.g., walking and cycling) is sought in order to reduce the contribution of tourism to air pollution, congestion and climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Investment in more sustainable transport infrastructure, including public transport and low emissions vehicles.</li> <li>b. Information promoted to visitors on alternative transport options to and within the destination</li> <li>c. Data on visitor use of alternative transport modes.</li> <li>d. Improvement and promotion of cycling and walking opportunities.</li> <li>e. Prioritization of visitor markets accessible by short and more sustainable transport options.</li> <li>f. Public sector and tourism enterprises prioritise low-impact transportation in their own operations.</li> </ul>	 
<p><b>D12 Light and noise pollution</b></p> <p>The destination has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution. The destination encourages enterprises to follow these guidelines and regulations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Guidelines on light and noise pollution – produced and promoted to tourism enterprises.</li> <li>b. Identification and monitoring of potential sources of noise and light pollution related to tourism.</li> <li>c. Mechanisms to enable residents to report noise and light pollution, with follow-up action.</li> </ul>	 