

## The European Ecotourism Labelling Standard EETLS-GR

**2<sup>nd</sup> (revised) version**

**PRISMA Centre for Development Studies and  
Hellenic Ecotourism Society**

**Athens, July 2019**



## Preface

The present revised version of EETLS has been prepared by the Hellenic Ecotourism Society – ELETOIK and PRISMA – Centre for Development Studies in 2019, aiming to meet the revised criteria list issued by the GSTC at the beginning of 2019. The revision submitted by ELETOIK and PRISMA was thorough and met the full approval of GSTC, which subsequently granted full recognition to EETLS-GR.

The original version of EETLS was developed in the context of the European Ecotourism Knowledge Network - ECOLNET project, part-funded by the European Commission in the framework of Lifelong Learning Programme, Transversal Programmes, Key Activity 3 – ICT Networks, 2010-2013.

The original version was composed by a team of ECOLNET members:

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ECOLNET aimed to create an Ecotourism network to bring together a variety of stakeholders and develop innovative evaluation tools and learning products for sharing knowledge among the network and facilitating quality certification through the European Ecotourism Labelling Standard (EETLS). The EETLS was developed by a previous Leonardo da Vinci project (ECO-DESTINET) in compliance (at that time) with the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria of the GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council).

The European Ecotourism Network – EEN has been set up as the main vehicle for achieving the objectives of the ECOLNET team and disseminate EETLS. Networking has been supported by a virtual community of interest, numbering at present 450 members from all over the world, accessible at <https://ecolnet.ning.com/>

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## A – Group of Criteria

### Demonstrate effective sustainable management

#### Introduction to the A Group of Criteria

The A group of criteria refer to effective sustainable management of an Ecotourism business.

The criteria apply to various aspects of the management system of an Ecotourism business, requiring the implementation of a long-term sustainability management plan and the business's compliance with all relevant national or local regulations and legislation. Special emphasis is given to employee training and proof is required regarding the periodic on-the-job training of staff. Due to the complex nature of Ecotourism operations, clear job descriptions are also required.

This group of criteria highlight the importance of visitor fulfilment and include specific measures that lead to corrective actions taken by the business to ensure the promised quality of service. Responsible marketing and accuracy of the promotional materials are given a specific mention.

The infrastructure of the business plays a central role in the effective management. The criteria make clear that the business and its activities should comply with local zoning and protected or heritage area requirements, respect the landscape and use sustainable construction practices for their facilities.

One of the core values of Ecotourism is to provide accurate, engaging and informative interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage. The A group includes a specific criterion for interpretation, ensuring that the business provides information about and interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture and cultural heritage.



## A.1. Management system

### Criterion

The company has implemented a long-term sustainability management scheme that is suitable to its reality and scale, and that considers environmental, sociocultural, quality, human rights, health, safety, risk and crisis management issues and drives continuous improvement.

### Rationale

A realistic business plan and a long term sustainability management scheme, which is communicated to both staff and clients, gives to the enterprise greater chances in implementing high quality Ecotourism measures.

### Sub-criteria

A.1.1. The business has a sustainability management plan, which includes specific actions related to Ecotourism.
A.1.2. The business ensures that the sustainability management plan considers environmental, sociocultural, quality, health, safety and human rights issues
A.1.3. The business ensures that the sustainability management plan considers risk and crisis management issues.
A.1.4. The business ensures that the sustainability management plan drives continuous improvement of its day-to-day operation.

### Proof requested A.1.

A.1.1. Present the sustainability management plan including an ecotourism development action plan
A.1.2. Explain how the sustainability management plan considers environmental, sociocultural, quality, health, safety and human rights issues
A.1.3. Provide evidence about how the sustainability plan takes into account risk and crisis management issues, with examples
A.1.4. Explain how the business ensures that the sustainability management plan drives continuous improvement of its day-to-day operation, with examples

## A.2. Legal compliance

### Criterion

The company is in compliance with all relevant international, national or local legislation and regulations (including, among other things, health, safety, human rights, labour and environmental aspects).

### Rationale

Ecotourism operations have to be an example of good practice, complying with all relevant legislation and regulations.

### Sub-criteria

A.2.1. The business complies with all necessary legislation and regulations (health, safety, labour and environmental aspects).
A.2.2. The business has the necessary permits to operate as a tourism business.
A.2.3. The business is registered with the financial authorities.

### Proof requested A.2.

A.2.1. Submit copies of all relevant certificates and fill in an affidavit form.
A.2.2. Submit copies to the permits showing that the business is legally operating in the tourism sector.
A.2.3. Submit evidence of registration with the tax office.

### **A.3. Reporting and communication**

#### **Criterion**

The business communicates its sustainability policy, actions and performance to customers and other relevant parties and seeks to engage their support

#### **Rationale**

A policy promoting sustainability is an important asset for an ecotourism business, and needs to be communicated to the environment of the business including its customers; such communication moreover ensures the transparency of the profile and operation of the business.

#### **Sub-criteria**

- |   |
|---|
| A.3.1. The business communicates its sustainability policy, actions and performance to customers and other relevant parties.                          |
| A.3.2. The business seeks to engage the support of its customers and other local and national stakeholders related to its remit, and acts accordingly |

#### **Proof requested A.3**

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|---|
| A.3.1. Submit evidence of the communication channels used by the business to make public its sustainability plan, the content of communication and the recipients of communication. |
| A.3.2. Submit evidence of the engagement of support of customers and other local and national stakeholders of the business's operation.   |



## **A.4. Staff engagement**

### **Criterion**

Personnel working in/for the business are engaged with the development and implementation of the sustainability management plan and receive periodic training and guidance regarding their roles and responsibilities in its delivery.

### **Rationale**

An Ecotourism operator should aim for quality in services and this can only be achieved with well-informed and trained personnel, which is actively involved in the development and implementation of the sustainability management plan of the organisation. Ecotourism employers should seek to provide on-going suitable training to their employees.

### **Sub-criteria**

A.4.1. Persons employed by the business in a permanent or seasonal basis are invited to participate in the development of the sustainability management plan
A.4.2. Persons employed by the business in a permanent or seasonal basis are invited to participate in the implementation of the sustainability management plan
A.4.3. All staff receive periodic training regarding their roles and responsibilities with regard to environmental, sociocultural, quality, human rights, health, safety, risk and crisis management issues

### **Proof requested A.4**

A.4.1. Submit evidence of the staff's involvement in the preparation of the sustainability plan of the business.
A.4.2. Submit evidence of the staff's involvement in the implementation of the sustainability plan of the business, and outline the roles and responsibilities of each staff member.
A.4.3. Submit evidence of related periodic training programmes as part of an annual training plan, and outline the topics included in the training

## **A.5. Customer experience**

### **Criterion**

Customer satisfaction, including aspects of sustainability, is monitored and corrective action is taken where appropriate.

### **Rationale**

Customer satisfaction is a top priority for a tourism business. To achieve this, monitoring customer satisfaction and developing practices to meet the demands of clients is crucial.

### **Sub-criteria**

A.5.1. The business has a system for periodic collection and analysis of informal and formal customer feedback (at least twice per year) and corrective measures are taken.
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### **Proof requested A.5**

A.5.1.i Submit evidence that a customer feedback system is in place and indicate the corrective measures taken by business as result of the customer feedback
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A.5.1.ii. Present the feedback form and provide information of the number of completed forms over the past 12 months
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A.5.1.iii. List the suggestions and complaints received, with numbers; and describe the corrective measures taken.
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## **A.6. Marketing accuracy**

### **Criterion**

Promotional materials are accurate and complete and do not promise more than can be delivered by the business.

### **Rationale**

Ecotourism should excel in quality of offered services. The Ecotourism business should be responsible and should not promise more than it can be delivered to the client.

### **Sub-criteria**

A.6.1. Practical information relating to the ecotourism activities to be undertaken is readily available (proper clothing, equipment, special knowledge, factors that might degrade the tourism experience, potential dangers etc.) to clients.
A.6.2. Promotional materials and all marketing activities of the business should: a. reflect clearly the reality of the destination; b. be complete and accurate on the offered services/products; c. not promise more than can be delivered. d. include the sustainability claims of the business, with tangible examples

### **Proof requested A.6**

A.6.1. Submit evidence of the practical information provided to clients about the ecotourism activities they can engage
A.6.2i. Submit copies of the promotional materials and describe the marketing activities of the business. A.6.2ii. Submit evidence showing that the information provided about the offered services / products is accurate, complete and does not promise more that can be delivered; and includes also information about the efforts of the business to establish sustainability management, with examples.

## **A.7. Design and construction of buildings and infrastructure**

### **A.7.1. Local Zoning**

#### **Criterion**

Buildings and other infrastructure comply with local zoning and protected, sensitive or heritage area requirements.

#### **Rationale**

The facilities of the business comply with land use zoning and protected or heritage zoning requirements. The activities of the business should comply with criterion A8.

#### **Sub-criteria**

A.7.1.1. The business complies with land use planning and special protected area and heritage regulations.
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#### **Proof requested A.7.1**

A.7.1.1. Submit evidence that the building(s) have planning permission and comply with existing protected area and heritage regulations.
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## **A.7.2. Design and siting**

### **Criterion**

Respect the natural or cultural heritage surroundings in siting, design, impact assessment, and land rights and acquisition; and take account of the capacity and integrity of the natural and cultural surroundings.

### **Rationale**

The business facilities should set a good example in respecting the landscape, the natural and cultural heritage of the site and all existing land and access rights, including land acquisition.

### **Sub-criteria**

A.7.2.1. The design and siting of buildings respect the natural surroundings.
A.7.2.2. The design and siting of buildings respect the cultural heritage surroundings.
A.7.2.3. Property has been acquired in a legal manner, complying where applicable with local indigenous community rights
A.7.2.4 The carrying capacity of the natural and cultural surroundings has been assessed
A.7.2.5 The impact on the integrity of the natural and cultural surroundings has been assessed

### **Proof requested A.7.2**

A.7.2.1. Submit photos and/or video of the buildings showing clearly their architectural style as well as the surrounding area.
A.7.2.2. Submit photos and/or video of the buildings and any other available evidence to show how well they integrate in the cultural heritage surroundings.
A.7.2.3i. Submit copies of the title deeds of the property and any other document showing that it has been acquired in a legal manner.
A.7.2.3ii. Submit evidence that local community rights have been respected.
A.7.2.4. Submit a study assessing the carrying capacity of the surrounding cultural and natural area in relation to the activities introduced by the business, especially taking into account the numbers of visitors and the intensity of ecotourism activities performed in the area.
A.7.2.5. Submit evidence that the integrity of the natural and cultural surroundings is not compromised, preferably included in the study of carrying capacity of sub—criterion A.7.2.5.

### **A.7.3. Sustainable construction**

#### **Criterion**

Use locally appropriate and sustainable practices and construction materials.

#### **Rationale**

The construction of tourism facilities needs to follow sustainable construction principles and set an example for the local community.

#### **Sub-criteria**

A.7.3. In the design and construction phase of buildings local sustainable materials and sustainable construction techniques have been used.
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#### **Proof requested A.7.3**

A.7.3. Submit photos and/or video and other evidence (e.g. architectural plans, purchase of materials) showing the use of local building materials and sustainable construction techniques.
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#### **A.7.4. Access for all**

##### **Criterion**

Provide access and information for persons with disabilities and other special needs where appropriate.

##### **Rationale**

Ecotourism as a responsible form of tourism should offer the chance to persons with disabilities and other special needs to experience nature and cultural heritage.

##### **Sub-criteria**

A.7.4.1. The business offers access to clients with disabilities and other special needs and facilitates the use of its services by these clients, where appropriate

A.7.4.2. The business offers information to clients with disabilities and other special needs regarding access to the facilities offered and to ecotourism activities that can be pursued in the surrounding area.

##### **Proof requested A.7.4**

A.7.4.1. Submit photos and/or video showing the facilities and access points for people with disabilities and other special needs, with descriptions

A.7.4.2. Submit evidence, in the form of leaflets, posters, website info etc showing that information about access points for people with disabilities and other special needs is available, including information about access to activities in the surrounding area.

## A.8. Information and interpretation

### Criterion

Information about and interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture and cultural heritage is provided to customers, as well as explaining appropriate behaviour while visiting natural areas, living cultures, and cultural heritage sites.

### Rationale

Interpretation is one of the core values of Ecotourism that clearly differentiates it from other forms of tourism. The Ecotourism business should strive to provide engaging interpretation and support environmental education.

### Sub-criteria

A.8.1. The business has developed an interpretation plan to accompany its activities.
A.8.2. The sources of information that are used in interpretation are credible.
A.8.3. Interpretation is delivered to clients by trained staff and professional guides.

### Proof requested A.8

A.8.1. Submit evidence that the business has developed interpretation material for all its activities and the places visited by its clients
A.8.2. Describe the sources of information used in interpretation and submit evidence of these sources
A.8.3. Submit a list of the people who are in charge of interpretation and describe their qualifications and training received, with evidence.



## **A.9. Compliance of activities with special regulations in protected areas**

### **Criterion**

Ecotourism activities comply with regulations that allow or forbid certain types of recreational activities in protected areas.

### **Rationale**

Ecotourism means low impact and respect to nature and cultural heritage. Outdoor activities performed by tour-operators or promoted by accommodation units or visitor centres have to be an example of good practice in respecting and protecting nature and cultural heritage.

### **Sub-criteria**

A.9.1. The business knows and respects the protected area regulations that concern recreation activities.

### **Proof requested A.8**

A.9.1. Present copies of the protected area regulations or management plan; and describe how you apply in practice these regulations

## **A.10. Raise visitors' sensitivity of the host destination**

### **Criterion**

Information provided to customers or disseminated as part of the marketing effort should raise public sensitivity of the host destination's natural, cultural, social and political conditions.

### **Rationale**

A core value of Ecotourism is raising awareness of the special conditions in tourism destinations, regarding both their natural assets and the local communities, and encouraging exchange of experience between tourists and local inhabitants.

### **Sub-criteria**

A.10.1. Information provided to customers or disseminated as part of the marketing effort should raise sensitivity of the host destination's natural, cultural, social and political conditions.
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### **Proof requested A.10**

A.10.1. Show the information provided to customers directly or through the publicity/marketing material of the company presenting the host destination
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## **A.11. Destination engagement**

### **Criterion**

The business is involved with sustainable tourism planning and management in the destination, where such opportunities exist.

### **Rationale**

A responsible ecotourism business should show concern about the planning and management of tourism activities in the destination where it is located and should participate in local committees and other collective bodies, including the responsible local and regional authorities, where there is such opportunity.

### **Sub-criteria**

A.11.1. The business seeks out opportunities to become involved in the sustainable tourism planning and management of the destination where it is located, participating in local committees and other collective bodies, including the responsible local and regional authorities, where such opportunity exists.

### **Proof requested A.11**

A.11.1. Provide evidence of responses to local/regional authorities or initiatives taken to approach them in relation to sustainable tourism planning and management of the ecotourism destination where the business is located; and/or participation of the business in committees or other collective bodies involved in planning/management tasks concerning the destination.

## **B – Group of Criteria**

### **Maximise social and economic benefits to local communities and minimise negative impacts**

#### **Introduction to the B Group of Criteria**

The B group of criteria relate to a core principle of Ecotourism that is maximising the social and economic benefits to the local communities and minimising the negative impacts. In practice this has been a real challenge for many tourism destinations in Europe. The EETLS proposes certain criteria that aim to maximise local community benefits deriving from Ecotourism operations and from the influx of ecotourists in the destination. For example, the Ecotourism business is asked to support initiatives for social and infrastructure development so that both the local community benefit from a better standard of living and the visitors enjoy a more comfortable stay. The win-win situation of this criterion is evident; but what is perhaps not so evident is that through the support of such initiatives the business becomes more active within the community, playing the role of rural “animator”, which is crucial if the business wishes to achieve the Ecotourism targets and abide by its goals.

Regarding the local economy, the business could take some further initiatives to support economic diversification and employment development. Such actions could include the employment of local people in management positions, providing good job opportunities to young qualified persons and offering them a chance to remain in their areas. Rural areas in Europe suffer from the loss of young qualified workers and Ecotourism should offer incentives to local youngsters to remain with their communities.

Apart from directly supporting local employment, the business should also offer the opportunity to local entrepreneurs to sell products that are based on the area’s nature, history and culture.

The criteria of this group also highlight another need - that of on-the-job training and personal development. The means to achieve this is through lifelong learning and giving incentives to employees to seek further training.

An Ecotourism business should be a responsible employer and contractor, therefore apart from staff training, the business is asked to adopt an equitable hiring policy and respect international and national legal protection of employees. A specific mention is also made on incentives for employees based on their job performance, acquisition of further qualifications etc.



## **B.1. Community development**

### **Criterion**

B.1. The business actively supports community development initiatives promoting social and economic issues and vital infrastructure, including, among others, initiatives on education, health, and sanitation, and projects which address the impacts of climate change.

### **Rationale**

European Ecotourism should support initiatives that encourage participation in community decision-making, promote activities for the well-being of the community and strive for sustainable development. It should also set the example and lead actions that promote community development and address the impacts of climate change..

### **Sub-criteria**

B.1.1. The business supports initiatives and takes up action for local community development.

B.1.2. The business supports education activities in local communities focusing on nature and local culture appreciation.

B.1.3. The business promotes the destination and the local community through its marketing tools (web page, brochure, Ecotourism guide).

### **Proof requested B.1.**

B.1.1 Submit evidence of actions that promote local community development e.g. regarding employment, health, social welfare, infrastructure etc.

B.1.2. Submit evidence of education activities supported by the business locally over the past 12 months - e.g. training programmes, lectures, proof of events in local schools or NGOs, photos etc.

B.1.3. Provide links to the website of the business, brochure and other publicity material promoting the destination

## B.2. Local employment

### Criterion

B.2. Local residents are given equal opportunities for employment and advanced during both the construction and the operation phases of the business, including management positions; training is offered as necessary.

### Rationale

Rural areas in Europe suffer from depopulation and internal migration to urban areas. Ecotourism can offer a viable alternative to qualified local people to remain with their communities.

### Sub-criteria

B.2.1. Local residents are employed in the business
B.2.2. The business provides incentives for recognition of job performance and personal development to staff.
B.2.3. If large parts of the tourism product are subcontracted, subcontractors registered within the administrative area of the destination get preference.

### Proof requested B.2.

B.2.1. Submit list of staff, including origin and years in the region, position, seasonal or full-year status (B7 also)
B.2.2i. Describe the incentives offered to staff and state how many of your employees have benefited from the incentives over the past 12 months B.2.2ii. Make reference to employee training and how it contributes to personal development of your staff
B.2.3. Submit a list of major subcontractors with addresses and explain preference

### **B.3. Fair-trade**

#### **Criterion**

B.3 Local services and goods are purchased and offered by the business, following fair trade principles

#### **Rationale**

Europe is rich in agricultural products and local cuisine is a strong element of the cultural heritage. Ecotourism should promote the consumption of locally produced goods and organic products (D.1.1). When a product is not locally or EU produced, fair-trade goods should be sought. The direct economic benefit of the community from purchased goods or services is a main goal of Ecotourism.

#### **Sub-criteria**

B.3.1. The business by priority supports local service providers and local producers.
B.3.2. The business by priority uses local food products.
B.2.3. The business uses seasonal fruits and vegetables.
B.2.4. When a product is not locally or EU produced, fair-trade goods are preferred.

#### **Proof requested B.3.**

B.3.1. Provide information to explain decisions for supplier selection
B.3.2. Present menu and identify the origin of ingredients
B.2.3. Present menu and identify the seasonality of ingredients
B.3.4. Present menu and identify the fair trade goods that are included in the ingredients

## **B.4. Local entrepreneurs**

### **Criterion**

B.4. The business encourages local small entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products that are based on the area's nature, history, and culture (including food and drink, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.). The business also supports local service providers.

### **Rationale**

Ecotourism development needs synergy with local economies and can support the diversification of rural economies. European Ecotourism should provide benefits to a range of local producers and entrepreneurs who offer responsible products and services. Ecotourism providers should promote this interaction by cooperating with local entrepreneurs and service providers.

### **Sub-criteria**

B.4.1. The business directly supports local entrepreneurs in the sale of sustainable products and services that are based on the area's nature, history, and culture.

B.4.2. The business encourages, cooperates with and promotes local producers and service providers who offer sustainable products and services.

### **Proof requested B.4.**

B.4.1. List and submit evidence of a) local products sold through the business (e.g. pricelist, photos) and b) services offered by local entrepreneurs promoted by the business (e.g. leaflets, contracts with the business)

B.4.2. Present website, brochure, other publicity materials promoting local producers and service providers.



## **B.5. Exploitation**

### **Criterion**

The business has implemented a policy against commercial, sexual or any other form of exploitation and harassment, particularly of children, adolescents, women, minorities and other vulnerable groups.

### **Rationale**

All forms of exploitation and harassment of children, adolescents, women and minorities is covered by E.U laws and national legislation. The operator should enforce relevant policies and be vigilant in reporting illegal activities.

### **Sub-criteria**

B.5.1. The business implements a policy against all forms of exploitation and harassment, particularly of children, adolescents, women, minorities and other vulnerable groups.
B.5.2. The business has signed the international code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism: <a href="http://www.thecode.org">www.thecode.org</a>
B.5.3. The business respects the rights of children (according to the UN Convention on Rights of Children, Art. 32 )
B.5.4. The business has a policy against purchase of goods produced with child labour.

### **Proof requested B.5.**

B.5.1. Include a statement that the business adopts such a policy and provide examples of how it is implemented
B.5.2. Submit evidence that the business has signed the code
B.5.3. Include a statement that the business respects the UN Convention on Rights of Children, Art. 32
B.5.4. Include a statement that the business adopts such a policy

## **B.6. Equitable hiring**

### **Criterion**

The business applies equitable hiring of staff, including management staff, without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways.

### **Rationale**

Equal opportunities in employment are covered by legislation in all E.U countries. The operator should enforce relevant policies and be vigilant in reporting illegal activities.

### **Sub-criteria**

B.6.1. The business provides equal opportunities for employment without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways, in staff positions.
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B.6.2. The business provides equal opportunities for employment without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways, in management positions.
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### **Proof requested B.6.**

B. 6.1. Submit evidence of non-discrimination hiring policy, present list of staff
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B.6.2. Submit the staff list (B.2.1 list used) with additional information on gender, disabilities and ethnic or cultural origin of staff
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## **B.7. Employee protection**

### **Criterion**

B.8. The national legal protection of employees is respected, a safe and secure working environment is provided and employees are paid a fair wage. Employees are offered regular training, experience and opportunities for advancement.

### **Rationale**

An Ecotourism operator should be a responsible employer. Employees should have full legal rights regarding social insurance and terms of employment and at least the minimum salary should be respected according to national legislation. If employees are accommodated in the operator's facilities, living conditions should be fair.

### **Sub-criteria**

B.7.1. Employees, including seasonal staff, are fully covered by social insurance according to the current legislation of the country, and terms of employment are aligned with national legislation or included in collective agreements between trade unions of employers and employees
B.7.2. Employees are paid a fair wage.
B.7.3. Employees are offered a safe and secure working and living environment
B.7.4. Employees are offered regular training, experience and opportunities for advancement.

### **Proof requested B.7.**

B.7.1. Present the insurance certificates of staff, providing evidence showing that Law 4387/2016 and subsequent revisions are observed and applied. Regarding terms of employment, provide evidence through staff contracts that the National Collective Agreement for Employment in the Tourism Sector of 19/2/2016 and its subsequent revisions, or local collective agreements of a similar nature, if they exist, are respected.
B.7.2. Present the annual list of staff payment, indicating a) that the statutory minimum wage is applied and compliance with Collective Agreements, local or national is in place. Additionally, demonstrate that the directions of Law 1346/1983 applies for seasonal staff.
B.7.3. Present plans and photos of the buildings or part of buildings housing staff and their amenities.
B.7.4. Present evidence that employees are offered regular training and experience sessions; and include details about the content of training and the qualifications of trainers. Demonstrate with examples how trained staff are given

## **B.8. Basic services**

### **Criterion**

The activities of the business do not jeopardise the provision of basic services, such as food, water, energy, healthcare or sanitation to neighbouring communities.

### **Rationale**

Tourism is a resource-intensive activity. The operator should set or follow policies ensuring that tourism inflow doesn't surpass the carrying capacity of the host community and destination, including beachfront and waterfront access. The operator should take all needed measures to ensure that tourism activity is sustainable.

### **Sub-criteria**

B.8.1. The business and its activities do not negatively affect the provision of basic services to local communities, including water, energy, healthcare or sanitation, by overconsumption in relation to community needs.

### **Proof requested B.8.**

B.8.1i. Present proof of water and energy consumption (e.g. bills) and identify the water and energy sources used.

B.8.1ii. Report the frequency of using local healthcare facilities by your guests.

## C – Group of Criteria

### Maximise benefits to cultural heritage and minimise negative impacts

#### Introduction to the C Group of Criteria

The C group of criteria refers to the cultural heritage that is present at a certain destination, aiming to maximise the positive impacts of Ecotourism on cultural heritage and minimise the negative ones. This is highly important for Ecotourism, because cultural and natural heritage are the main ingredients of the Ecotourism product. Cultural heritage may refer to material and non-material aspects, such as vernacular architecture; monuments and archaeological sites; historical buildings and places; handicrafts that are characteristic of the area; typical dress; special types of dishes and foods more generally; songs and music; customs and celebrations; myths and legends, etc.



## C.1. Cultural interactions

### Criterion

The business follows international and national good practice and locally agreed guidance for the management and promotion of visits to indigenous communities and culturally or historically sensitive sites in order to minimise adverse impacts and maximise local benefits and visitor enjoyment.

### Rationale

Europe is rich in cultural, historical and archaeological sites. Most sites are managed by competent authorities and strict regulations exist regarding visitors' behaviour. The operator should enforce relevant policies and be vigilant in reporting illegal activities.

### Sub-criteria

C.1.1. The business follows international and national good practice for the management and promotion of visits to indigenous communities and culturally or historically sensitive sites in order to minimise adverse impacts and maximise local benefits and visitor enjoyment.

C.1.2. The business follows locally agreed guidance for the management and promotion of visits to indigenous communities and culturally or historically sensitive sites in order to minimise adverse impacts and maximise local benefits and visitor enjoyment..

### Proof requested C.1

C.1.1. Presentation of the code of conduct applied by the business concerning visits to indigenous communities and culturally or historically sensitive sites, and how it relates to international and national good practice.

C.1.2. Presentation of the guidelines applied by the business, as agreed with the local communities, concerning visits to indigenous communities and culturally or historically sensitive sites, and how it relates to international and national good practice.

## **C.2. Protection of cultural heritage**

### **Criterion**

The business contributes to the protection, preservation and enhancement of local historical and archaeological sites and other culturally and spiritually important properties and does not impede access to them by local residents.

### **Rationale**

Sites important for the local community that are also tourism attractions should be treated carefully by the Ecotourism business. Access to local people should not be impeded by the activities of the business, but on the contrary encouraged.

### **Sub-criteria**

C.2.1. The business takes measures to protect, preserve and enhance local historical and archaeological sites and other culturally and spiritually important properties and traditions, contributing either financially or in kind.

C.2.2. The business ensures that under no circumstances access to important cultural sites is impeded to local people due to tourism activities.

### **Proof requested C.2**

C.2.1. Describe how the business contributes to the protection of local cultural heritage and traditions.

C.2.2. Report any complaints, formal or informal by the local community (connected with B.9).

### **C.3. Incorporation of culture**

#### **Criterion**

The business values and incorporates authentic elements of traditional and contemporary local culture (art, architecture or cultural heritage) in its operations, design, decoration, food, or shops; while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.

#### **Rationale**

Utilising aspects of local culture wherever possible increases ties with the neighbouring communities and promotes the destination's unique character; it also provides an incentive to preserve unique skills that may otherwise vanish. The Ecotourism business should enhance this by incorporating local traditional elements in its facilities and activities, aiming to promote local culture. In many European countries and regions such elements are required by law (e.g traditional architectural design of new buildings). On the other hand, mimicking of local customs or organisation of quasi-traditional cultural activities and events clearly oriented to the uninformed tourist, has in many instances created conflict between tourism businesses and local communities. Good communication between the local community and the Ecotourism business is the key factor for ensuring the respectful exploitation of local culture for tourism purposes and avoiding possible wrong interpretations, conflicts and undesirable commoditisation.

#### **Sub-criteria**

C.3.1. The business incorporates authentic elements of traditional and contemporary local culture (art, architecture, or cultural heritage) in its operations, design, decoration, food, or shops.
C.3.2. The business respects the intellectual property rights of local communities.
C.3.3. The business respects and promotes the authenticity of local customs.

#### **Proof requested C.3**

C.3.1. Present proof of integration of local culture in products and facilities and specifically in food, decoration, design.
C.3.2. Declaration by the business owner.
C.3.3. Submit evidence that the cultural events organised in the premises of the business respect the authenticity of local culture (show photos, video).



## **C.4. Historical artefacts**

### **Criterion**

Original historical and archaeological artefacts are not sold, traded, or displayed, except as permitted by local and international law.

### **Rationale**

Safeguarding Europe's cultural heritage is of outmost importance. Tourism in the past has been a channel of illegal trading of archaeological artefacts found in unreported excavations. Selling or trading archaeological items is illegal in Europe and strict policies are in force. The operator should enforce relevant policies and be vigilant in reporting illegal activities, particularly when operating outside the E.U.

### **Sub-criteria**

C.4.1. Original historical and archaeological artefacts are not sold, traded, or displayed, except as permitted by local and international law
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### **Proof requested C.4**

C.4.1. Declaration by business owner
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## D – Group of Criteria

### Maximise benefits to the environment and minimise negative impacts

#### Introduction to the D Group of Criteria

The D group of criteria refers to maximisation of benefits and minimisation of negative impacts of tourism activities to the environment.

Ecotourism operates in natural areas and thus the well-being of the natural environment is very important. Tourism businesses can contribute to nature protection and wise use of natural resources by implementing a purchasing policy favouring environmentally friendly products e.g. for building materials, capital goods, food, consumables. Increased efficiency in the consumption of energy and water and investment in renewable energies may also bring economic advantages to the tourism operator and make the business more competitive in the market.

An implemented waste management plan monitors the reduction and appropriate treatment of wastewater, solid waste, harmful substances like cleaning materials and pesticides and other pollutants in order to preserve fauna, flora, soil, air and water in the destination.

To protect wildlife, the interaction between tourists and the wildlife site should be conducted in a responsible and regulated manner. Captive wildlife is only allowed within Wildlife Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries that comply with relevant legislation. Protected wildlife is treated with respect and products or decorative elements that are made by raw materials deriving from protected wildlife species are not allowed. In landscaping outdoor spaces of tourist facilities, native species are used that are appropriate for the local climate and biodiversity.



## **D.1. Goods and resources consumption**

### **D.1.1. Environmentally preferable purchasing policy**

#### **Criterion**

Purchasing policy favours environmentally sustainable suppliers and products, including local, seasonal, organic or recycled products for capital goods, food, building materials and other consumables.

#### **Rationale**

The purchasing policy is one of the most important policies in the operation of an Ecotourism business and is part of the sustainability management scheme. Through the purchasing policy the business should make a clear statement in favouring products that are environmentally friendly, local, seasonal, organic, recycled and reused.

#### **Sub-criteria**

D.1.1.1. The business has a purchasing policy that gives priority to environmentally sustainable local suppliers and local products/services.
D.1.1.2. The business has a purchasing policy that gives priority to environmentally friendly seasonal, organic or recycled products for capital goods, food, building materials and other consumables.
D.1.1.3. The business has a purchasing policy that gives priority to reusable and recycled products.
D.1.1.4. The business has a purchasing policy that gives priority to energy efficiency and low emission goods.

#### **Proof Requested D.1.1**

D.1.1.1. Submit evidence that at least 80% of the goods purchased (food, farm- organic products, souvenirs, building materials, capital goods, consumables and other goods) are primarily produced/provided locally and/or are typical local products.
D.1.1.2. Submit evidence that certified products from the region are preferred or/and consist on fair trade – organic products.
D.1.1.3i Submit evidence that only reusable or recyclable containers are displayed (for example glasses). D.1.1.3ii. Submit evidence that disposable items are not used (utensils and containers) except under special circumstances and no often than once/person/stay. D.1.1.3iii. Submit evidence that one of the purchase selection criteria of products is based on the volume and material of packaging.
D.1.1.4i. Submit evidence that all newly purchased equipment are class A energy ("energy efficient"). D.1.1.4ii. Submit evidence that all transport, purchased or hired/leased, is of a standard that seeks to minimise environmental impact.

### **D.1.2. Efficient purchasing**

#### **Criterion**

The business carefully manages the purchasing of consumable and disposable goods including food, in order to minimise waste.

#### **Rationale**

Measuring the purchase of disposable (non-reusable) and consumable goods is a cost-saving initiative essential in the reduction of waste production and conservation of natural resources. An overall thinking of the life cycle of the product from its conception to its end of life should be in place starting from the purchase phase till the sharing with the customer. Promoting the minimisation of the use of disposable and consumable goods by the business's clients constitutes good practice with overspill benefits to society and scarce resources.

#### **Sub-criteria**

D.1.2.1. The business monitors the purchase of disposable and consumable goods, including food, and actively seeks ways to minimise waste
D.1.2.2. The business monitors the proportion of recycling achieved of all disposable and consumables. (see EU regulation)
D.1.2.3. The business promotes the minimisation of the use of disposable goods among its clients.

#### **Proof requested D1.2**

D.1.2.1. Submit evidence that continuous measurement, control and verification of waste disposal is implemented
D.1.2.2i. Show with appropriate documentation what is the proportion of recycling material achieved within the overall waste disposal volume of the business.
D.1.2.2ii. Submit evidence (photos) that proper recycling containers are placed (glass, paper/cardboard, organic waste plastics, chemicals etc) in the premises of the business.
D.1.2.3. Present evidence of leaflets, posters and other means of informing guests how to minimise the use of disposable goods.

### D.1.3. Energy conservation

#### Criterion

D.1.3. Energy consumption is measured by type, sources are indicated, and measures are adopted to minimise overall consumption, while encouraging the use of renewable energy.

#### Rationale

Energy use is one of the most damaging activities on the planet with adverse environmental impacts, such as degrading air, water, soil quality, human and ecological health. Energy efficiency and reduction on the use through sustainable technologies are key strategies to reduce these negative impacts. The greatest environmental and financial benefits related to business operations are achieved by frequently monitoring the utilities bills, training staff, appropriate customer communication preventive maintenance of mechanical equipment and by providing incentives to staff to implement energy efficiency programmes. By applying energy efficient practices to operations and investing in renewable energy technologies (e.g., solar, wind, micro-hydro, and bio-mass) the business can help conserve natural resources, promote energy independence, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The principal emissions from tourism businesses are from transportation (especially by air), heating, cooling, electricity use, and methane emissions from sewage and organic wastes. Except for air transport, most of these emissions can be directly reduced by actions from the business. Those emissions that are not reduced can be offset using properly regulated projects. Proper emission management practices will help reduce global warming, promote energy independence from foreign non-renewable sources, and may substantially reduce operational costs.

#### Sub-criteria

D.1.3.1. The business implements a sustainable energy plan, indicating energy supply sources, including renewable sources, and takes action to increase the use of renewable energy as a percentage of overall used energy in its premises.
D.1.3.2 Significant greenhouse gas emissions from all sources controlled by the business are identified, preferably in the context of the energy plan
D.1.3.3 Significant greenhouse gas emissions from all sources controlled by the business are calculated where possible.
D.1.3.4. The business measures and monitors overall energy consumption regularly, allowing the calculation of the average consumption per guest.
D.1.3.5. The business uses energy-efficient equipment and applies frequent maintenance to all machinery and equipment.
D.1.3.6. The business uses bio-climatic principles in the construction of the buildings and other infrastructure or takes corrective measures to improve the energy efficiency of its buildings and infrastructure
D.1.3.7. The business provides information and options on environment-friendly means of transport to staff and clients. (ref EU Ecolabel 22.)

**Proof requested D1.3**

D.1.3.1i. Show the sustainable energy management plan of the business. D.1.3.1ii Submit evidence of the investment made by the business for improvement of energy efficiency and use of renewable sources of energy
D.1.3.2 Provide evidence that significant greenhouse gas emissions from all sources controlled by the business are identified, and measures to reduce such emissions as necessary, are foreseen in the energy plan or in the policy of the business.
D.1.3.3 Provide evidence about the methods of calculating significant greenhouse gas emissions from all sources controlled by the business, either in the context of the energy plan of the business or independently as part of its environmental policy.
D.1.3.4i. Submit evidence of the measurements and state the annual consumption per guest D.1.3.4ii. Present documents showing the annual fuel consumption, annual electricity consumption (kWh), monitoring frequency, changes (increasing, decreasing, stable consumption)
D.1.3.5i. Submit evidence by showing extracts of the maintenance log and/or invoices for equipment servicing D.1.3.5ii. submit evidence that the business is charting the energy used (including the sources and related emissions) on a regular basis (e.g. monthly)
D.1.3.6i. Provide information on the bioclimatic characteristics of the building, including photos, architect's plans and certificates D.1.3.6ii. Provide information on investment made by the business in the past 5 years to improve the energy efficiency of the building, including photos (e.g. double glazing, roof insulation etc.)
D.1.3.7. Submit evidence that, when possible, walking or biking is used by staff and visitors.

### D.1.4. Water conservation

#### Criterion

Water risk is assessed, water consumption is measured by type, sources are indicated, and measures are adopted to minimise overall consumption. Water sourcing is sustainable and does not adversely affect environmental flows. In areas of high water risk context-based water stewardship goals are identified and pursued.

#### Rationale

Water is precious and an increasingly scarce resource especially in many European countries and regions, which face moderate or severe water shortages. All-year round or seasonal water shortages are expected to increase with climate change. Overall water consumption should be reduced to the minimum possible level for adequate operation. Reducing water consumption has also financial and environmental benefits for tourism businesses. Using water efficient equipment and a regular maintenance plan of plumbing installations great reductions can be achieved. When possible, the business should invest in infrastructure and equipment to utilise rainwater for non-sanitary and non-drinking purposes (ref. EU Ecolabel 50).

#### Sub-criteria

D.1.4.1. The business assesses water risk, preferably in the context of a water management plan.
D.1.4.2 The business regularly measures and monitors water consumption by type.
D.1.4.3. The business uses water efficient equipment and implements an effective maintenance scheme.
D.1.4.4. In areas of high water risk context-based water stewardship goals are identified and pursued.

#### Proof Requested D.1.4

D.1.4.1i. Present the sustainable water management plan of the business D.1.4.ii. Describe the measures that have been adopted to decrease overall consumption of water
D.1.4.2i. Present documents showing that the water consumption is regularly monitored D.1.4.2ii. Show samples of staff notices and client reminders to regularly save water
D.1.4.3. Present protocol to detect and to solve failures in the functioning of equipment regarding their water saving efficiency D.1.4.3. Present the maintenance log of equipment (e.g. taps, washing machines, dishwashers) for the past 12 months
D.1.4.4. Present evidence of water stewardship actions, supporting local communities and possibly making investments for water conservation.

## **D.2. Waste disposal**

### **D.2.1. Wastewater**

#### **Criterion**

D.2.1. Wastewater, including gray water, is effectively treated and is only reused or released safely with no adverse effects to the local population and environment.

#### **Rationale**

Wastewater management reduces aquatic pollution, protects aquatic ecosystems, and reduces risks to human health. Reusing wastewater increases the availability of potable water for human consumption (see criterion D.1.4) as well as reduces a business' sewage and clean-up fees. In order to avoid the disposal of substances that might prevent wastewater treatment, the business should inform guests and staff accordingly. (ref. EU Ecolabel 15.)

#### **Sub-criteria**

D.2.1.1. The business implements a sustainable plan for the reduction and the effective treatment and reuse of wastewater, including gray water.
D.2.1.2. The business is connected with the local wastewater and sewage treatment plant (where available) or has its own wastewater and sewage treatment installation.
D.2.1.3. The business informs guests and staff on the disposal of substances that might prevent wastewater treatment.

#### **Proof Requested D.2.1**

D.2.1.1i Present the plan and explain how it is implemented.
D.2.1.1ii Submit evidence that the business treats all waste water discharges in accordance with national regulatory standards / legislation.
D.2.2.iii Provide information about reusing wastewater when feasible.
D.2.1.2. Submit evidence of either option (e.g. photos, bills, reports).
D.2.1.3. Present notices, posters, leaflets etc which the business uses to inform guests and staff.



## D.2.2. Solid waste disposal

### Criterion

D.2.2 Solid waste, including food waste, is measured, mechanisms are in place to reduce waste and where reduction is not feasible to reuse or recycle it. Any residual waste disposal has no adverse effect on the local population and the environment.

### Rationale

Minimising the amount of solid waste that goes to landfills and incinerators helps reduce negative environmental impacts. Additionally, minimising waste reduces the need for virgin materials and limits the amount of greenhouse gases that are released throughout a product's life cycle (i.e. extraction, manufacturing, distribution, use and disposal). A lifecycle approach to waste management begins with the purchasing practices (D.1.1 and D.1.2) and includes coordination with local authorities on appropriate disposal methods.

### Sub-criteria

D.2.2.1. The business implements a solid waste management plan aiming to minimise waste and adopt the most efficient method of disposal available, making sure that there is no adverse effect on the local population and the environment.
D.2.2.2. The business measures and monitors the volume of waste produced, including food waste.
D.2.2.3. Organic waste is composted according to local regulations.
D.2.2.4. A recycling system is in place, used by staff and guests.

### Proof Requested D.2.2

D.2.2.1i. Present the solid waste management plan and explain how it is implemented without adverse effects to the local population and the environment.
D.2.2.1ii. Submit evidence that the business complies with the national legislation concerning waste disposal.
D.2.2.1iii. Submit evidence that both staff and customers are encouraged to take part in programmes for collecting, recycling and minimisation of waste (present leaflets, notices, posters, photos).
D.2.2.2i. Submit evidence that the total waste generated (in tons) by type and disposal method is documented; and all garbage is collected, sorted, monitored and disposal according to the waste management plan
D.2.2.2ii. Note the percentage of total waste that is reused and/or recycled (in connection with D.1.2.2)
D.2.2.3. Submit evidence that organic waste is composed on the site of the business or it is sent to composting fields (photos)
D.2.2.4i. Submit evidence that recycling of glass, paper/cardboard, plastics, ink, organic waste, batteries, other is performed. Provide details of the collection methods of recyclable items.
D.2.2.4ii. Provide information on whether the business offers a possibility for guests to separate waste. E.g.: have guest rooms separate waste containers with a clear indication / explanation for recycling?

### D.2.3. Harmful substances

#### Criterion

The use of harmful substances such as pesticides, paints, disinfectants and cleaning materials is minimised; substituted by innocuous products when available; and all chemicals' storage and use is properly managed.

#### Rationale

Chemicals and other non-organic materials slip into the environment during application and storage via evaporation, run-off, spills, leaks and over application. Such practice lead to air, soil and water pollution, adversely affecting the local environment, harming flora and fauna, contaminating water supplies for local communities and causing serious health problems. The misuse and improper handling of potentially toxic substances creates additional threats to the environment and human health. Many "natural" substitutes exist which are not only less harmful for the environment and human health, but are often cheaper. Technology has also developed various alternatives. Where no alternatives are possible, the proper storage, handling and use of chemicals can reduce potential impacts.

#### Sub-criteria

D.2.3.1. The business implements a sustainable plan for reducing the use of chemicals and harmful substances.
D.2.3.2. The business measures and monitors the consumption of chemicals and harmful substances.
D.2.3.3. The use of all chemicals is properly managed and disposal methods are monitored.

#### Proof Requested D.2.3

D.2.3.1i. Submit documentation of the plan and explain how it is used
D.2.3.1ii. Submit evidence of the levels of use and release of solvents (dry cleaning solvents, thinners) and hydrocarbon (essence, diesel)
D.2.3.2i. Submit evidence that monitoring is performed on an ongoing basis
D.2.3.2ii. Provide information whether the business has a refrigerant replacement plan, describe what that plan is and show documentation proving that all new equipment are being purchased in accordance with the plan in terms of the refrigerant used.
D.2.3.3i. Submit evidence that green areas are managed without the use of pesticides and according to organic farming principles.
D.2.3.3ii. Submit evidence about cleaning products, whether they are biodegradable (such as vinegar, citric acid, curd soap), environmentally certified or eco-certified.
D.2.3.3iii. Submit evidence that separate collection and appropriate handling of oils, fats and hazardous waste is implemented by the business.

## D.2.4. Other pollutants

### Criterion

D.2.4. The business implements measures to reduce pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds and air, water and soil contaminants.

### Rationale

Environmental pollution can derive from several sources and have long-term, damaging effects on local ecosystems and human populations. The business should regularly perform site audits to identify sources of potential pollution while educating and empowering staff to identify pollution during their daily activities. Particular attention should be paid to special local conditions, such as damage to coral reefs from sediments, eutrophication of rivers and lakes from runoff, melting of permafrost and light pollution of marine nesting sites, among others.

### Sub-criteria

D.2.4.1. The business implements a sustainable plan for the reduction of air, noise, light and soil pollution.
D.2.4.2. The business minimise non-natural noise and implements the requirements of a "Natural Quiet" policy.
D.2.4.3. The business minimise the use of artificial lighting and implements the requirements of a "Dark Skies" policy.

### Proof Requested D.2.4

D.2.4.1. Present the plan and explain how it is implemented
D.2.4.2i. Provide information on the usual noise level from all activities on the site (including telephones, public address system, transports, concerts, music, equipment and machinery) and how it compares to the background noise in the area.
D.2.4.2ii. Provide information about service and maintenance facilities and whether they are located away from the quiet areas or are provided with sound insulation.
D.2.4.3. Provide information on the use of illuminated signage and external lights; explain how flashlights and torches are used in activities involving night watching; and state whether natural light provides all necessary illumination to buildings in daytime.

## D.2.5. Transport

### Criterion

The business seeks to reduce transportation requirements and actively encourages the use of cleaner and more resource efficient alternatives by customers, employees, suppliers and in its own operations.

### Rationale

The business should contribute to cleaner air and traffic congestion by encouraging alternative means of transport, such as bicycles or tricycles and electric vehicles, using them for its own operations, and making them available (especially bicycles or tricycles) to customers, to encourage them not to take their cars when they intend to visit the surrounding areas. A similar policy could be applied to suppliers, preferring those who use alternative means of transport.

### Sub-criteria

- |  |
|--|
| D.2.5.1. The business seeks to reduce transportation requirements in its own operations.   |
| D.2.5.2 The business actively encourages the use of cleaner and more resource efficient transportation alternatives by customers, employees and suppliers. |

### Proof Requested D.2.5.

- |   |
|---|
| D.2.5.1i. Provide a list of the transportation means used by the business, who uses them and for what purpose                         |
| D.2.5.1ii. Explain how the business has reduced transportation requirements for different types of operations                         |
| D.2.5.2. Provide evidence that the business uses bicycles and other clean transportation means for customers, employees and suppliers |

### **D.3. Wildlife and biodiversity**

#### **D.3.1. Wildlife Species**

##### **Criterion**

D.3.1. Wildlife species are not harvested, consumed, displayed, sold or traded, except as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilisation is sustainable and in compliance with local and international regulations.

##### **Rationale**

In Europe there are strict regulations regarding use of wildlife species as products, either sold as consumer goods or food. European ecotourism should apply all existing policies, strive for stricter measures and be vigilant in reporting illegal activities. Consumption of endangered species is forbidden.

##### **Sub-criteria**

D.3.1.1. The business implements a strict policy regarding the protection of wildlife species.
D.3.1.2. The business abstains from any use of rare, endangered or protected wildlife species and reports illegal activities.

##### **Proof Requested D.3.1.**

D.3.1.1. Present the policy and how it is implemented
D.3.1.2. Include a statement of abstention and submit evidence of reporting illegal activities if applicable

### **D.3.2. Wildlife in captivity**

#### **Criterion**

No captive wildlife is held, except for properly regulated activities, in compliance with local or international regulations. Living specimens of protected and wildlife species are only kept by those authorised and suitably equipped to house and care for them.

#### **Rationale**

This criterion applies only to Wildlife Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. These can be part of an Ecotourism experience if they operate according to national, European and international regulations. All other Ecotourism establishments are prohibited to keep captive wildlife.

#### **Sub-criteria**

D.3.2.1. No species of wild animal is acquired, bred or held captive, except for properly regulated activities carried out in Wildlife Parks or Wildlife Sanctuaries, operating according to national, European and International standards and legislation.
D.3.2.2. No living specimens of protected wildlife species are acquired, bred or held captive, except for those kept by persons authorized and suitably equipped to house and care for them, in compliance with local and international law.
D.3.2.3 Housing, care and handling of all wild and domestic animals meets the highest standards of animal welfare.

#### **Proof Requested D.3.2.**

D.3.2.1. Submit documents showing the regulations of the Park, including reference to compliance with national, European and international standards
D.3.2.2. Submit evidence of the protection offered to wildlife and habitats, including the care, respect of the dignity and welfare of animals.
D.3.2.3. Submit evidence of the housing conditions and care protocol of wild animals kept, and explain how they meet the highest standards of animal welfare.

### **D.3.3. Landscaping**

#### **Criterion**

D.3.3 The business uses native species for landscaping and restoration, and takes measures to avoid the introduction of invasive alien species.

#### **Rationale**

Native flora is adapted to local conditions (drought, temperatures, etc) and local pests, reducing the need for irrigation (reducing water use D.1.4) and chemicals (criterion D.2.4). The character of the natural environment can be preserved by utilising sustainable landscaping techniques that incorporate local flora. Non-local species should not be used and if used, they should be screened to avoid introducing potentially invasive plants and animals, which have negative impacts on biodiversity and local ecosystems.

#### **Sub-criteria**

D.3.3.1. The business uses native species for landscaping and landscape restoration.
D.3.3.2. The business takes measures to avoid the introduction of invasive alien species.

#### **Proof Requested D.3.3.**

D.3.3.1i. Submit visual proof of the plants used for landscaping (photos, video) and a list of the plants, with an indication of their origin. D.3.3.1ii. Provide information whether the development and use of the site has involved clearing of the native vegetation and fauna. D.3.3.1iii. Submit evidence (photos, video) of the landscaping of the site and the degree to which it reflects the character of the surrounding natural environment.
D.3.3.2. List the alien species that are present in the open space used by the business and state what action is planned, if any, for replacing them with indigenous plants.

### **D.3.4. Biodiversity conservation**

#### **Criterion**

The business contributes to the support of biodiversity conservation, including appropriate management of its own property to this end. Emphasis is given to supporting natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity and high conservation value. Any disturbance of natural ecosystems is minimised or rehabilitated and there is a compensatory contribution to conservation management.

#### **Rationale**

Ecotourism activities and the quality of the Ecotourism experience depend heavily on the state of the natural environment. An Ecotourism business is also by definition an important direct and indirect benefactor of biodiversity conservation. Contribution can range from active participation in projects to financial contributions. The business has also the obligation to manage its own property on the basis of biodiversity conservation principles.

#### **Sub-criteria**

D.3.4.1. The business directly contributes and/or supports biodiversity conservation either financially or in-kind.
D.3.4.2. Biodiversity conservation activities are communicated to staff, clients and the local community.
D.3.4.3. The business manages its own property appropriately in order to support and contribute to biodiversity conservation

#### **Proof Requested D.3.4.**

D.3.4.1. Submit evidence of either financial or in kind contribution.
D.3.4.2. Submit evidence that conservation of biodiversity is communicated via notices, leaflets, posters, publication of articles etc addressing different audiences - and define these audiences.
D.3.4.3 Submit evidence and explain how the property of the business is managed using biodiversity conservation principles, provide examples to this end and management protocols.



### **D.3.5. Interactions with wildlife**

#### **Criterion**

Interactions with free roaming wildlife, taking into account cumulative impacts, are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse effects on the animals concerned and on the viability and behaviour of populations in the wild.

#### **Rationale**

The main aim of Ecotourism is the appreciation, protection and conservation of nature and wildlife. The Ecotourism business must ensure that any outdoor activity complies with the best available practices. In respect to the diverse cultures of Europe, European Ecotourism should allow close interaction of guests with wildlife only in cases of regulated activities and traditional activities that offer a genuine local cultural experience (e.g reindeer herding). Regarding commercial hunting and all other activities that result to loss of wildlife, the ecotourism provider should have a strict policy against its promotion and operation.

#### **Sub-criteria**

D.3.5.1. The business monitors interactions with free roaming wildlife, making sure that such interactions are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse effects on the animals concerned and on the viability and behaviour of populations in the wild.
D.3.5.2. The business respects codes of conduct for interaction with wildlife, and strictly enforces them; and implements a strict policy that does not promote commercial hunting and any other activity that results to loss of wildlife
D.3.5.3. The business contributes a percentage of its annual budget to restore or rehabilitate natural ecosystems and contribute to conservation management.

#### **Proof Requested D.3.5.**

D.3.5.1i. Submit evidence that the business complies with local/national legislation and respects the views of the local community on the subject. D.3.5.1ii. Submit evidence that the guests are informed about what behaviour is unsustainable and should be avoided, including unregulated hunting, shooting and fishing.
D.3.5.2i. Show a document which includes a written code of conduct for interaction with wildlife D.3.5.2ii. Submit evidence that the activities of the business do not include regular and deliberate intrusions that may cause significant disturbance to wildlife behaviour in their natural habitat D.3.5.2iii. Statement by the business that direct interaction with wild animals is only undertaken by staff with appropriate training and experience and it is conducted in such a way as not to cause any stress or disturbance to the animals. D.3.5.2iv. Submit evidence that the business informs the responsible nature conservation authorities about organised tours or other ecotourism activities to make sure that sensitive habitats will not be disturbed.
D.3.5.3. Present evidence that an amount is paid regularly for nature conservation purposes and provide details (to whom, for what purpose, how often etc).

### **D.3.6. Visits to natural sites**

#### **Criterion**

The business follows appropriate guidelines for the management and promotion of visits to natural sites in order to minimize adverse impacts and maximize visitor fulfilment.

#### **Rationale.**

Visits to natural sites of outstanding beauty, high sensitivity and remarkable biodiversity and ecological interest should be appropriately prepared by the business, so that its customers who take part in these are well informed of the potential hazards their visit might underlie as well as of the numerous interests that they may wish to explore on site. Many ecotourists, especially the less experienced ones, are not well aware of the potential damage their visit might cause to sensitive natural sites and they also wish to be informed of all the outstanding features of the visited area, so that their benefit and enjoyment from the visit increases, and their eco-experience gains in richness.

#### **Sub-criteria**

D.3.6.1. The business follows appropriate guidelines for the management and promotion of visits to natural sites in order to minimize adverse impacts and maximize visitor fulfilment.
D.3.6.2. The business makes available communication material (leaflets, brochures etc) to visitors to inform them of appropriate behaviour when visiting sites of natural value; and/or organises talks and presentations prior to such visits.
D.3.6.3 The business offers guided tours led by well-qualified staff or external collaborators to ensure the maximum benefit of customers and maximum protection of natural sites during site visits; and asks customers to evaluate such visits.

#### **Proof Requested D.3.6.**

D.3.6.1. Provide evidence of guidelines followed by the business, e.g. by providing copies of visit protocols used by staff or external collaborators accompanying customers to site visits.
D.3.6.2. Provide copies of communication material offered to customers in printed form (leaflets, brochures etc) or links to such material offered online
D.3.6.3 Provide evidence of guided tours organised by the business for its own customers, schedule of such visits and evaluation by customers.

