

# Green Activities criteria and explanatory notes

The Green Activities criteria are based on Criteria for Green Key Attractions with the permission of Green Key International.

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# 1. Environmental management

## IMPERATIVE CRITERIA

### 1.1 The management is involved and has appointed an environmental manager from amongst the staff of the establishment.

To ensure that Green Activities is properly implemented and administered, the management of the establishment is in charge of appointing an environmental manager from the staff of the establishment.

Where relevant, it is strongly recommended to create a “green committee” with representatives from all departments. The “green committee” oversees the implementation of the environmental/sustainability initiatives in cooperation with the environmental manager, as well as keeping other staff members in the various parts of the establishment informed.

The appointed environmental manager fulfils, in most cases, a part-time function. It can be any staff member, but is most often the chief engineer, the person responsible for housekeeping, front desk, HR, or the general manager. The position of environmental manager should be mentioned in the person’s job description.

The main functions of the environmental manager include:

- Being contact person for all environmental/sustainability matters to management, staff, suppliers, and Green Activities national/international representatives
- Being responsible for instructing and supporting other staff members on environmental/sustainability matters
- Being responsible for gathering, managing, and updating the environmental data on cleaning, waste, and the efficient use of gas, water, and electricity
- Being responsible for the development and implementation of the environmental policy and action plan of the establishment
- Being responsible for gathering and processing new sustainability ideas and initiatives from staff and guests.

The environmental manager oversees the communication with Green Activities in relation to the application or re-application for Green Activities. In the case of an establishment changing environmental manager, Green Activities is to be informed about the change.

During the audit, the environmental manager is normally present to answer questions and explain about the work done at the establishment with regards to environmental matters in general and Green Activities related criteria specifically.

## 1.2 The establishment has formulated a sustainability policy.

To ensure an overall framework for the sustainability work of the establishment, a sustainability policy, also called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy, is formulated. It describes the overall aims and ambitions in relation to the establishment's environmental, social, and economic impact. The sustainability policy is a general statement with a commitment for continuous improvements and monitoring, but it does not deal with specific issues or how to handle them. The sustainability policy should be more ambitious than merely complying with legislation and regulations. The sustainability policy of the establishment is to be reviewed every third year to allow for continuous improvement.

The sustainability policy must include a) presentation of the environmental commitment and goals of the establishment, and b) presentation of the social/cultural/economic/quality commitment and goals of the establishment.

The environmental commitment should include:

- consumption of resources (energy, water, etc.)
- commitment to apply the circular economy principles
- consumption and monitoring of environmental pollutants, for example chemical cleaning products, air pollutants and fertilizers/pesticides
- reducing the carbon footprint
- supporting the protection of local or international biodiversity

The social, cultural, and economic commitment should include:

- labour rights and equity (including prohibition on using child labour)
- safe and secure working environment
- risk and crisis management
- anti-corruption
- opposition to commercial, sexual or any other form of exploitation or harassment, particularly of children, adolescents, women, minorities, and other vulnerable groups
- support for the equal treatment and rights of people
- hiring staff in all positions including management (especially local residents/minorities), without discrimination on the grounds of age, race, gender, religion, disability, socio-economic status, etc.
- reference to training, information, and awareness-raising
- reference to the support of the local community
- support for the establishment's involvement in sustainable tourism planning and management locally

It is strongly encouraged that the sustainability policy is developed in cooperation with the staff and compiled in a way that includes contributions from both the management and the staff. The sustainability policy is normally signed by the general manager of the establishment. After development, the sustainability policy is available to all employees of the establishment.

It is strongly encouraged that each establishment has its own sustainability policy, but if the establishment is part of an international or national chain, a common sustainability policy could be shared within the same chain.

During the audit, the establishment presents the sustainability policy document and verifies its availability to the staff of the establishment. A check will be conducted to ensure that the sustainability policy is less than three years old and that it is a general document, including environmental issues as well as socio-cultural and economic issues.

### **1.3 The establishment has formulated objectives and an annual action plan for continuous improvement.**

To ensure a more concrete plan for the sustainability work of the establishment, objectives are set, and an annual action plan is formulated. The objectives and annual action plan reflect the concrete work towards fulfilling the sustainability policy and include specific objectives to be reached in the coming 1-3 years and specific actions for reaching the planned objectives in the coming year.

In order to define concrete objectives and actions for the long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its size and scale, the establishment's objectives and action plan includes environmental issues as well as reference to social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health, risk, and crisis management issues.

It is strongly encouraged that the objectives and annual action plan document are developed in cooperation with the staff and compiled in a way that includes contributions from both the management and the staff.

It is expected that the establishment will formulate a minimum of three action points within different areas of its operation. When preparing the objectives and annual action plan, it is strongly encouraged to use the Green Activities criteria for inspiration, both regarding compliance with guideline criteria not yet implemented and to further improve engagement in already implemented imperative and guideline criteria. It should be noted that the establishment must ensure compliance with an increasing percentage of guideline criteria during consecutive years of holding the Green Activities award. Objectives and actions that are already fulfilled cannot be added to the objectives and annual action plan.

If the establishment is part of a larger chain, there can be an overlap between the objectives/actions formulated within the chain and the ones used in Green Activities.

During the audit, there is an administrative check on the presence and content of the objectives and annual action plan document for the coming year, and its availability for the staff of the establishment. It is checked that the document includes a minimum of three action points within different sustainability areas and different areas of operation. If the

establishment has had the Green Activities for more than one year, there is also an evaluation of the work for the objectives and annual action plan in the previous year. Where some planned actions were not carried out, there is a discussion about why the applicant establishment was not able to carry out the planned actions during the past year with recommendation for remedial action.

#### **1.4 All documentation concerning Green Activities is kept and maintained in a binder ready for inspection.**

To have all information easily accessible, the Green Activities binder is normally organised according to the Green Activities criteria sections and numbers and contains all the relevant and updated documents showing compliance with each criterion.

The Green Activities binder can be a physical binder with paper copies of the various documents, or it can be an electronic binder with the documents organised in folders (e.g. as part of the Intranet of the establishment). To save resources, it is recommended that the binder is electronic.

During the audit, the environmental manager presents the Green Activities binder for inspection and for proof of compliance with the various Green Activities criteria.

#### **1.5 The establishment establishes active collaboration with relevant local stakeholders.**

The aim of this criterion is to enhance the active role the establishment plays in creating environmental awareness in the local area around it and promoting environmentally friendly practices to collaborating partners.

The criterion is mainly focusing on collaboration on environmental issues (e.g. protection of the local biodiversity), but it could also refer to social, cultural, educational, economic, quality, human rights, health, risk, and crisis management issues. Where appropriate, Green Activities encourages the establishment to cooperate with stakeholders involved in the protection and enhancement of local historical, archaeological, cultural, and spiritually significant sites and traditions.

The relevant stakeholders could be non-governmental organisations, local community groups, local authorities, residents, local schools, suppliers, management authorities of protected areas, etc.

Examples of local cooperation could include cooperation with local schools on educational and/or sustainability initiatives, supporting museums to promote local heritage, cooperation with local suppliers (other than the sole purchasing of local products), cooperation with local community groups/destination management organisations/authorities on sustainable

tourism planning and management in the destination, local infrastructure and social community development projects (e.g. sanitation).

Local cooperation, including cooperation on various biodiversity and environmental protection initiatives (e.g., tree-planting, rewilding and creating pollinator-friendly local areas and natural corridors, nature conservation, beach clean-up events, etc.), is strongly encouraged.

For the collaboration to be approved, it must be an active two-way collaboration between the establishment and the relevant stakeholders for the benefit of both parties.

Hotels, hostels, campsites, and holiday parks must have a minimum of two (2) active partnerships with local stakeholders. Small accommodations, conference centres, restaurants and attractions must have a minimum of one (1) active partnership with a local stakeholder.

During the audit, documentation showing active collaboration with the required number of local stakeholders will be checked.

## GUIDELINE CRITERIA

### 1.6 The establishment calculates its carbon footprint using a carbon measurement tool.

With this criterion, the establishment identifies its sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and uses its measured annual energy consumption and other sources of GHG emissions to make an estimate of its total annual carbon footprint, as well as the carbon emissions per guest/room night or per guest using a carbon measurement tool. The calculation should be used to check the fluctuations in carbon emissions of the establishment at least once a year with the aim of reducing it.

The tool used must:

- be verified GHG protocol compliant
- have conversion factors publicly available and regularly updated as new information emerges
- include all scope 1 and 2 emissions, and preferably also the most significant scope 3 emissions
- have the possibility of presenting the results by scope in order to set reduction targets by scope

There are different carbon measurement tools available with different levels of accuracy. One of the tools for accommodations is the Hotel Carbon Management Initiative (HCMI) which provides the estimated carbon footprint of an accommodation sector establishment. The HCMI tool can be found on the international Green Activities website.

During the audit, the establishment presents the carbon measurement tool used and the calculated results for the past 12 months.

### **1.7 The establishment sets a target to reduce its carbon footprint by at least 5% annually.**

With this criterion, the establishment uses its calculated carbon footprint as a basis for formulating a target of at least 5% annual reduction to further reduce carbon emissions. The establishment also identifies the actions needed to reach the target, e.g., reduction in energy consumption, increasing efficiency measures and/or installing onsite renewable energy systems.

During the audit, the establishment presents the target and actions for reducing the carbon footprint. This can be included in the annual action plan (see criterion 1.3)

### **1.8 The establishment has reached its target of at least 5% reduction in emissions in the past 12 months.**

During the audit, the establishment presents the carbon measurement tool used, the previously set reduction target and the calculated reduction results for the previous 12 months. The reduction must be demonstrated using the same calculating tool as for the previous year

### **1.9 The establishment offsets its greenhouse gas emissions with certified climate offsetting projects.**

The establishment annually offsets its greenhouse gas emissions from scope 1 & 2 with a climate offsetting project that has international certification, e.g.:

- Verified Carbon Standard
- Gold Standard
- Plan Vivo

To comply with this criterion, the establishment ensures that:

- The greenhouse gas calculations include all direct and indirect emissions from scope 1 and scope 2
- All data and calculations are documented.
- The establishment has an emission monitoring and reduction strategy in place.
- All emissions of greenhouse gases are offset
- An independent third-party verifier/auditor reviews all the above documents

During the audit, the establishment presents

- a) the greenhouse gas calculations including all direct and indirect emissions from scope 1 and scope 2
- b) the updated carbon reduction strategy for the relevant year, and
- c) documentation that proves implemented climate offsetting with purchased volume, choice of project and standard and
- d) documentation proving that the offsetting project has been verified by an independent/ accredited auditor.

### **1.10 The establishment is verified carbon neutral.**

To comply with this criterion, the establishment ensures that:

- Its greenhouse gas calculations include all direct and indirect emissions from scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3.
- All data and calculations are documented.
- The establishment has an emission monitoring and reduction strategy in place.
- All emissions of greenhouse gases are offset
- An independent third-party verifier/auditor has reviewed all the above documents

During the audit, the establishment presents

- a) the greenhouse gas calculations including all direct and indirect emissions from scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3.
- b) the updated carbon reduction strategy for the relevant year, and
- c) documentation that proves implemented climate offsetting with purchased volume, choice of project and standard and
- d) proof that the offsetting project is verified by an independent/ accredited auditor.

### **1.11 The establishment offers its guests a possibility to compensate the emissions caused by their visit through an internationally recognised carbon scheme.**

With this criterion, the establishment offers its guests the possibility to compensate the carbon emissions generated during their visit and/or travel to the establishment.

After an establishment has calculated its average carbon emission per guest or per guest/room night (see criterion 1.6), the establishment offers its guests the opportunity to compensate the carbon emissions of their stay. In addition, the establishment can offer its guests the possibility to compensate the carbon emissions of their travel to and from the establishment.

The compensation should be done through a carbon compensation scheme, e.g. a scheme that holds an international certification, e.g. Gold Standard).

The establishment offers the carbon compensation by promoting a carbon compensation scheme to the guests and providing them with information about it and a link to the scheme. Alternatively, the establishment can also collect the funding from the carbon compensation of the guests and then send it to the carbon compensation scheme.

The establishment can choose to offer the carbon compensation to guests individually, or it can be offered to companies organising the guests' stay at the establishment (e.g. tour operators, group tour organisers, conference organisers, etc.).

During the audit, the establishment presents the information it supplies to its guests encouraging them to avail of carbon compensation to offset their stay and/or travel to and from the establishment.

## 2. Staff

### IMPERATIVE CRITERIA

#### 2.1 The management holds periodic meetings with the staff to brief them on issues concerning existing and new environmental initiatives.

To raise the environmental/sustainability awareness at the establishment, it is important that the management, environmental manager and/or green committee ensure an information flow to the staff and engage the staff in the environmental/sustainability initiatives set by the establishment.

Keeping the staff updated about existing and new environmental/sustainability initiatives gives the staff a better understanding of their role in the work and the impact of their contribution, but also enables them to properly inform, and answer questions from guests on the matter. The staff is not only informed about the environmental/sustainability initiatives, but also can contribute ideas and suggestions.

The information includes issues of environmental management (e.g., water, energy, waste, cleaning, food and beverage, and the circular economy principles: reduce, reuse, recycle, etc.), and other sustainability issues (e.g. local biodiversity issues), but also issues of awareness-raising of guests, staff, suppliers and the surrounding community. Information about Green Activities must also be provided to the staff.

The management of the establishment therefore normally organises at least 1-3 annual meetings. When planning the meetings, consideration is given to seasonal employees to ensure the broadest possible staff participation.

This criterion considers both internal staff hired by the establishment as well as staff contracted from an external company.

During the audit, minutes/notes/attendance lists from the meetings held between the management and staff are presented, showing the persons present and the environmental/sustainability issues discussed. If the establishment is applying for the first time, it presents the planned meetings. If the total number of staff members is below five, the information about the meetings held can be given orally. The auditor may also interview staff to ascertain their level of knowledge on environmental initiatives of the establishment.

#### 2.2 The environmental manager participates in meetings with management for the purpose of presenting the environmental developments of the establishment.

If the environmental manager is not part of the management of the establishment, he/she must be invited to meetings with the management. The meetings between the environmental manager (and the green committee, where applicable) and the management of the establishment are important to keep the management informed and involved in the environmental work of the establishment, as well as to ensure continued endorsement by the management of the work on environmental issues. In some smaller establishments the meetings between the staff and management, and between the environmental manager and management, can be held at the same time. It is expected that the establishment normally holds at least 1-3 annual meetings.

During the audit, minutes/notes from the meetings held between the management and environmental manager (and green committee) are presented, showing the persons present and the environmental/sustainability issues discussed. If the establishment is applying for the first time, it presents the planned meetings.

### **2.3 All staff members receive yearly training on environmental and other sustainability issues relevant to their job description.**

It is important that the environmental manager (and green committee), as well as other staff members, receive specific training on environmental and other sustainability issues, so that suitable and feasible solutions for the establishment can be determined and implemented.

The training includes issues of environmental management (water, energy, waste, hazardous chemicals, cleaning, food and beverage, air quality, environmentally friendly use of appliances, the circular economy principles: reduce, reuse, recycle, etc.), awareness-raising of guests, staff, suppliers and the surrounding community, as well as other sustainability issues, addressing climate change, local biodiversity, social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health, risk, and crisis management issues. Training should also include knowledge about Green Activities and could also be extended to add knowledge on other issues within or around the establishment (e.g., protection of biodiversity).

This criterion applies to employees who are employed for at least 4 consecutive weeks/year.

The training can be both external and internal. External training could be in the form of training courses by consultants, experts, guides or product suppliers, study trips, participation in seminars, webinars and other online courses and studies, networks, etc. In some countries, Green Activities seminars and webinars are organised to especially focus on trends and ideas in relation to compliance with Green Activities criteria, and these meetings can also be used as a networking platform between Green Activities awarded establishments. For establishments that are members of an international or national chain, there is often training conducted on environmental and other sustainability topics within the chain.

It is also important that internal courses and training are organised by the environmental manager (and green committee) for staff members on how to work towards achieving the

environmental objectives and actions planned within the establishment. The internal training can involve individual staff members or groups of staff members. In addition to the training, the establishment can offer engaging sustainability initiatives (e.g., competitions) and/or reward systems for the staff.

It is expected that each staff member in the establishment normally participates in at least 1-3 annual training sessions organised by the establishment. New staff members should normally receive the training within the first four weeks of their employment.

For persons working in the establishment daily but not employed as staff by the establishment (e.g., persons working in housekeeping from an outsourced company), it is strongly encouraged that these persons also receive the same training on environmental and other sustainability issues.

During the audit, a document must be presented, showing the external/internal training sessions held in the past 12 months, with information about participating staff covering the areas of environmental management and awareness-raising, and other sustainability topics. If the establishment is applying for the first time, it presents the planned training. During the visual inspection, staff members might be interviewed to confirm that they have received training.

## **2.4 Information is displayed in the staff area/ otherwise available to promote responsible behaviour.**

To reduce both the environmental footprint and costs, signage/instructions are displayed in the staff area reminding the staff of the sustainability initiatives of the establishment.

The signage/instructions should encourage the staff to use resources wisely (e.g., switching off the light/taps, using less paper, etc.) recycle and help them to use devices and machines more efficiently (e.g. the dishwasher, laundry machines, vacuum cleaners, etc.) In addition, information could reference protection of the local biodiversity, etc. as well as social responsibility (e.g., how to report discrimination, etc.).

Raising awareness of the staff about the sustainability undertakings of the establishment can be achieved through staff notice boards, posters, stickers, leaflets, newsletters, digital information on screens/apps, etc. Depending on the type and form of awareness-raising activity, it could be aimed at individuals, groups or all staff members at the same time.

During the visual inspection, the signage and instructions are shown to the auditor.

## GUIDELINE CRITERIA

### 2.5 The establishment provides its staff with the opportunity to evaluate its environmental and/or socio-cultural performance.

To involve all staff members in the environmental and social initiatives of the establishment and to empower them to actively contribute to the sustainability work, the establishment provides a feedback mechanism whereby staff can evaluate the environmental and/or social performance of the establishment and make suggestions for improvement.

This can be done by conducting regular surveys on the matter, during feedback meetings or through a suggestion box that is managed by the environmental manager. The feedback can be given anonymously.

During the audit, the feedback mechanism is shown to the auditor.

### 2.6 The establishment encourages its staff to use environmentally friendly means of transport when commuting to work.

The following transport forms are considered environmentally friendly in this context: non-motorised methods, public transport (bus, train, tram, ferry etc), vehicles operated with 100% renewable fuels/electricity, rideshares and communal staff transport organised by the employer etc.

To fill the criterion, the establishment must encourage its staff to use the above-mentioned forms of transport and provide concrete support for choosing them. This could take the form of providing a safe place for storing bicycles and staff showers, a charging station for electric cars, subsidised tickets for public transport or parking places for electric cars etc.

In the audit the establishment presents the concrete measures it has taken

### 2.7 The establishments offer its staff free/subsidised opportunities/spaces to exercise during/after working hours.

In order to increase the wellbeing and physical activity of its staff and to reduce sick leaves, the establishment encourages an active, mobile lifestyle. The encouragement may take the form of offering them free/subsidised exercise space/equipment/ activities. The activity may take place outside of working hours, but Green Activities encourages offering exercise possibilities also during them. The activity may take place either within or outside of the establishment's premises.

To fill this criterion, the establishment must have offered weekly subsidised/free exercise opportunities to all its permanent staff during for at least the past 6 months.

In the audit the establishment presents the concrete measures it has taken.

## 3. Guest information

### IMPERATIVE CRITERIA

#### 3.1 Green Activities certificate is displayed in a prominent place.

The establishment is required to display the standard Green Activities certificate by the front desk.

Additional copies of Green Activities certificate can be purchased and placed at other strategic locations (e.g. at the staff information board or canteen).

The display of the award is used by the establishment as a marketing tool presenting the achievement of the Green Activities award, but also to create visibility for the Green Activities label.

During the audit, it is checked that the standardised Green Activities certificate for the current period are displayed. If the establishment has not received the Green Activities award in the past, the proposed location for the display of the certificate is shown.

#### 3.2 Information about Green Activities is visible and accessible to guests.

The guests visiting the establishment must be able to find information about the requirements for achieving the Green Activities.

Information about Green Activities can be available in public areas if prominently placed, e.g. by an “environmental corner”, on TV monitors in public areas, information at the front desk, etc. The information about Green Activities can also be available in the information folders, TV monitors in the guest/meeting rooms and/or guest apps. The Green Activities logo (in the correct format) is normally displayed as part of the information.

As part of joining the Green Activities programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear and easily understandable information regarding the establishment and its products and services, including sustainability claims, and must not promise more than can be or is implemented by the establishment.

During the audit, it is checked that the informative material about Green Activities is visible and accessible in the public areas and/or guest/meeting rooms. If the establishment did not receive the Green Activities award in the past, the draft informative materials, and location(s) where it will be available are presented. It is checked that the information is accurate, clear, and easily understandable.

### **3.3 Information about Green Activities and environmental information is available on the establishment's website, social media and other online communication channels.**

The establishment's website must contain brief information about the Green Activities programme and the fact that the establishment has achieved the award. The links to the national Green Activities website are included. The Green Activities logo (in the correct format) must also be displayed. The website also displays brief information about the environmental undertakings of the establishment. The information is presented in accordance with the establishment's own branding guidelines.

In addition to the information on the website of the establishment, it is also encouraged that the establishment provides information about Green Activities in its social media.

As part of joining the Green Activities programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear and easily understandable information regarding the establishment and its products and services, including sustainability claims, and must not promise more than can be or is implemented by the establishment.

During the audit, the information about Green Activities and environmental information on the website is shown. If the establishment has not received the Green Activities award in the past, the draft information for the website is presented. It is checked that the information is accurate, clear and easily understandable.

### **3.4 The establishment keeps guests informed about and involved in its environmental work and encourages them to participate in environmental initiatives.**

It is important that the establishment informs its guests about the environmental undertakings of the establishment through information material or TV monitors in public areas, guest/meeting rooms, and/or guest apps.

Besides the information about the environmental undertakings, it is also important that the establishment adds information about how the guests can be involved and actively participate in the environmental initiatives of the establishment. The active participation can

involve environmental management (e.g., water saving, energy saving, waste saving/recycling, food waste reduction, etc.), but can also focus on other sustainability issues (e.g. local biodiversity protection, support to social charities, etc.).

As part of joining the Green Activities programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear and easily understandable information regarding the establishment and its products and services, including sustainability claims, and must not promise more than can be or is implemented by the establishment.

During the audit, the information about environmental/sustainability undertakings provided for guests is presented, including the encouragement for guests to participate in the work. If the establishment has not received the Green Activities award in the past, the draft information for the guests is presented. It is checked that the information is accurate, clear, and easily understandable

### **3.5 Staff members are able to inform the guests about Green Activities and the establishment's current environmental/sustainability initiatives.**

With the Green Activities award (plaque and certificate) being displayed by the entrance of the establishment, and information about Green Activities and environmental/sustainability undertakings displayed in the public areas, guest/meeting rooms and on the website of the establishment, guests might be interested in learning more about Green Activities. In this case, guests might approach the staff in charge of welcoming them (e.g., reception staff, ticket office staff) and it is therefore important that these persons are able to inform guests about Green Activities and the most important environmental/sustainability initiatives of the establishment.

As part of joining the Green Activities programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear and easily understandable information regarding the establishment and its products and services, including sustainability claims, and must not promise more than can be or is implemented by the establishment.

During the audit, the staff in charge of welcoming guests are asked to provide basic information about Green Activities and the most important environmental/sustainability initiatives of the establishment. It is checked that the information is accurate, clear, and easily understandable.

### **3.6 The establishment informs and encourages guests to use sustainable transportation alternatives.**

To encourage guests staying at the establishment to use means of transportation other than cars and taxis, where feasible and safe, the establishment must be able to inform guests about these alternatives.

The alternative means of transportation includes:

- Local public/private transportation systems (bus, train, metro, tram, boat, etc.)
- Shared taxis/minibus systems
- Taxis from companies that have an environmental policy, e.g., using electric cars, biofuel petrol, etc.
- Shuttle buses provided by the establishment
- Other means of transportation including bicycling opportunities and walking alternatives

For guests using electric cars, the establishment could have a smart electric vehicle charging station or inform about the nearby locations for charging electric cars.

The information about local transportation systems and other transportation alternatives is provided by the persons welcoming guests, front desk staff, the concierge and/or through information material available in the public areas or guest/meeting rooms.

As part of joining the Green Activities programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear and easily understandable information regarding the establishment and its products and services, including sustainability claims, and must not promise more than can be or is implemented by the establishment.

During the audit, the information provided by the establishment about local transportation systems and other transportation alternatives is presented. It is checked that the information is accurate, clear, and easily understandable.

## GUIDELINE CRITERIA

### 3.7 The establishment provides its guests with the opportunity to evaluate its performance, including sustainability performance.

A feedback questionnaire can provide an indication of the guests' satisfaction in relation to the performance of an establishment. Besides covering more general issues (such as quality, price, service, etc.), it must also include questions related to the sustainability performance of the establishment.

If the guest feedback in the evaluation requires corrective action, this must be done by the establishment, where possible.

During the audit, the establishment shows the evaluation questions relating to sustainability performance, as well as providing examples of how the guest feedback is monitored and used in corrective actions.

### **3.8 The establishment has made a marketing/awareness raising campaign about the environment within the past 12 months.**

The campaign may be aimed at customers, suppliers or other external stakeholders. In order to qualify, the campaign must have been visible to the target group, last for at least 2 weeks, and involve actions beyond the everyday routines of the establishment.

In the audit, the establishment presents the campaign material.

### **3.9 Communication about environmental issues is included in the company's annual communications plan where various target groups are included.**

Sustainability work is an integral part of the company's business and communications. In order to raise the environmental awareness of its customers and stakeholders and to involve them in sustainability work, the target must plan its sustainability communications in advance and designate its main target groups.

Different target groups may include meeting guests, leisure travellers, business travellers, families with children, regulars, etc. Once the target groups have been identified, communication can be better designed to meet the needs and preferences of the target group.

In the audit, the establishment presents its communication plan or part of it that deals with environmental communications. The plan shall address communication channels, target groups of communications, timing of communication activities and a Activitiesmessage of environmental communication.

### **3.10 The establishment rewards its customers for environmental actions taken during their visit.**

A good way to encourage customers to make environmentally friendly choices is to reward them with a product, service, discount etc. Such choices can include, for example, bike lending or rental, arrival by public transport, choosing vegetarian food or requesting not to clean the room during a stay of several nights. In order to meet the criterion, the establishment must reward environmentally friendly actions. The reward could be e.g. a gift

card/discount voucher to a customer who foregoes room cleaning a free coffee for a customer who has chosen vegetarian food etc.

In the audit, the establishment presents the method used for rewarding customers for environmental actions.

## 4. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

### IMPERATIVE CRITERIA

#### 4.1 The establishment confirms that it follows all relevant international, national, and local regulations, regarding environment, health, safety, and labour.

The establishment confirms that it has legally acquired property, land and water rights complying with local, communal, and indigenous rights (including their free, prior and informed consent). The establishment confirms that all its function and activities (including the areas of environment, labour, health, and safety) take place in compliance with international, national, and local legislation/regulations. The establishment also confirms that it respects local surrounding community rights and standards.

Regarding compliance with environmental requirements, the following conditions must, as minimum, be met:

- Ensuring that activities in connection with the management of the establishment do not have significant negative effects on natural ecosystems and wildlife. Any disturbance of natural ecosystems is minimised, rehabilitated and a compensatory contribution made to conservation management. This is always done according to national/local legislation. This also includes practices to reduce pollution from noise and light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and air, water, and soil contaminants.
- If the establishment is in or near a sensitive or protected area, it knows and respects the legislation and regulations regarding tourism activities within the sensitive or protected area.

Regarding compliance with labour requirements, the following conditions must, at the minimum, be met:

- All employees receive information in writing (contract) stating the employment terms and conditions, including information about working hours and salary.
- All employees are paid at least a living wage.
- No employees receive money or pay deposits before starting work, and all employees receive owed money when terminating the work.

- All employees receive information in writing about the working code of conduct/policies of the establishment, and the written procedure for raising concerns/complaints.
- For all employees under the age of 18, national regulations as well as the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and ILO (International Labour Organization) Conventions 138/182 are followed.
- All employees receive fair treatment without discrimination (in connection with recruitment, general employment, training, promotion).
- All employees work in a safe and secure working environment.
- All employees are offered regular training, experience, and opportunities for advancement.
- All employees can give feedback on their work conditions (e.g., through appraisals, staff satisfaction survey, etc.).
- The employer keeps a copy of all pay slips and a record of number of working hours and overtime.

Regarding compliance with health and safety requirements, the following conditions must, as minimum, be met:

- All employees receive information and training about the health and safety requirements
- All employees have access to the written health and safety policies and plans
- All guests have access to written information about safety in the establishment

Regarding compliance with local surrounding community rights and standards, the following conditions must, for example, be met:

- The activities do not adversely affect local access to livelihoods, land and aquatic resource use, rights-of-way, transport, and housing (including involuntary resettlement of inhabitants).
- The activities do not jeopardise the provision of basic food, water and energy services as well as health and sanitation services to neighbouring communities.
- The establishment does not prevent access by residents to local historical, archaeological, or culturally and spiritually important properties and sites.
- The siting, land use, capacity, design, construction, operation and demolition of buildings and infrastructure comply with local zoning and protected or heritage area requirements. It takes account of the capacity and integrity of the natural and cultural heritage surroundings in siting, design, impact assessment and land rights and acquisition.
- The establishment identifies and follows the local development codes and architectural management guidelines.

During the audit, the establishment presents its sustainability policy confirming compliance with relevant international, national, and local legislation, including the areas of environment, health, safety, and labour, as well as confirming its respect for local surrounding community rights and standards. The observations during the visual inspection confirm compliance with the requirements.

## **4.2 The establishment ensures that all its employees, trainees and volunteers are covered by insurance against injury at work.**

The commitment must be mentioned in the sustainability policy. In the audit, the establishment presents its sustainability policy.

In the audit, the establishment presents its sustainability policy that ensures that the criterion is met.

## **4.3 Plants and animals, as well as historical and archaeological artefacts, are not sold, traded, or displayed, except those which are permitted by law.**

To create awareness about the establishment's corporate social responsibility and support of environmental sustainability through the protection of species of plants and animals, e.g. endangered species as listed in the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) agreement, the establishment does not harvest, sell, trade or display these plant or animal species in the establishment.

Species of wild animals are not acquired, bred, or held captive, except for properly regulated activities, and when kept by those authorised and suitably equipped to house and care for them. Housing, care, and handling of all wild and domestic animals must meet the highest standards of animal welfare. Interactions with free roaming wildlife organised by the establishment 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 (taking the cumulative impact into account).

To protect historical and archaeological artefacts, such items are also not sold, traded, or displayed by the establishment.

The establishment only sells, trades, or displays plants and animals and/or historical and archaeological artefacts if local, national, and international legislation permits it.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation (for example, mentioned in the sustainability policy) showing how it works to ensure that no endangered species of animals and plants and no historical or archaeological artefacts are sold, traded, or displayed in the establishment. If the establishment is selling related products, it provides a statement from the national authorities permitting it to sell, trade or display the products. During the visual inspection, a spot check for sold, traded, or displayed species of plants/animals or historical/archaeological artefacts is carried out.

#### **4.4 The establishment requires that its subcontractors comply with regulations regarding labour rights.**

The establishment pays attention to the working hours, overtime pay, rest and vacation days, sick pay etc arrangements of its subcontractors that have employees working on-site. The establishment ensures in its contracts with subcontractors as well as in practice that relevant legislation is adhered to.

In the audit, the establishment presents its sustainability policy as well as how these commitments are monitored.

### **GUIDELINE CRITERIA**

#### **4.5 The staff has received training about inclusivity within the past 12 months.**

To increase awareness of inclusivity of tourism services, members of staff should receive training. The training should reach all staff members that are working with customer service, marketing and product/service design. The aim of the training should be to improve consideration for inclusivity in the establishment both in terms of accessibility and usability. For example, the training may focus on equal treatment of all guests.

In the audit, the establishment presents what training on inclusivity the staff has received during the past 12 months, as well as how inclusivity has been taken into consideration in its sustainability policy and practice.

#### **4.6 The establishment offers accessible services and information related to accessibility for people with physical disabilities.**

To provide access for people with additional needs and to create awareness about the establishment's corporate social responsibility, it must provide access for people with additional needs. The access relates to guests as well as staff and other users of the establishment.

Examples of people with additional needs include people with certain physical disabilities (persons in wheelchairs) and people with specific health concerns.

This criterion includes access to the public areas: entrance and reception area, conference facilities, restaurant, public sanitary facilities, swimming pools, etc. It is recommended that the establishment also provides access to equipped guest rooms, including the bathrooms in the guest rooms. It is strongly recommended that the facilities are approved by a national/local disability association.

In some special cases, the establishment may have received a dispensation from the authorities regarding certain types of access for people with additional needs, e.g., wheelchair access to old/historical buildings, and in these cases this criterion is not applicable.

The level of access for people with additional needs offered by the establishment is clearly communicated to the guests, staff, and other users. When information regarding access is present, users will have reasonable expectations, and it will also avoid unnecessary transportation.

As part of joining the Green Activities programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear, and easily understandable information about its facilities, products, and services. The establishment must not promise more than can be provided.

During the audit, the establishment demonstrates access and procedures for people with physical disabilities, as well as the information provided on its website/premises about access for people with additional needs.

#### **4.7 The establishment has taken into consideration sensory disabilities/limitations in designing its premises/products/services.**

To qualify for this criterion, the establishment must have made adjustments in the design of its premises/products /services to accommodate the needs of people with sensory limitations/disabilities.

For example, this could mean:

- a sensory map of the premises available on the website
- a menu card with illustrations of all available dishes

In the audit, the establishment presents the measures it has taken to comply with the criterion

#### **4.8 The establishment is equitable in hiring women and local minorities, including in management positions.**

To support the equal treatment and rights of people and create awareness about the establishment's corporate social responsibility, it hires staff, in all positions, without discrimination by age, race, gender, religion, disability, socio-economic status, etc. It is strongly recommended that the establishment adds this obligation to its sustainability (CSR) policy.

To support the community near the establishment, it is important that residents (and especially local minorities) are given equality of opportunity to be employed as staff in the establishment, in all positions including in management positions, and that training is offered as well as advancement when possible. It is strongly recommended that the establishment also adds this obligation to its CSR policy.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation (e.g. its CSR policy) showing how it ensures that it is equitable in hiring women and local minorities, including in management positions. Observations made during the visual inspection confirm compliance with the requirements.

#### **4.9 The establishment provides traineeships and part-time/ flexible terms employment for long term unemployed or people of limited employability.**

To qualify for this guideline criterion, the establishment must have provided traineeships or employment to long-term unemployed or people with limited employability for at least 3 months in the past 12 months.

#### **4.10 The establishment actively supports at least two environmental or social community development activities.**

To support the environmental, economic and socio-cultural sustainable development and to create awareness about the establishment's corporate social responsibility, it is active in supporting green actions or social community development activities (including education, health, sanitation, infrastructure, etc.).

It is encouraged that the support is focused on the area surrounding the establishment, but it could also be support of projects in other geographical areas. Examples of active support by the establishment could include:

- Tree-planting activities
- Planting and restoration of green areas
- Projects addressing the preservation of biodiversity with reference to aquatic/marine zone areas or projects supporting natural corridors and "rewilding" of open areas
- Protection of natural and culturally sensitive areas
- Projects addressing the impacts of climate change
- Outdoor actions (establishment of environmentally friendly boat mooring places, nature trails) that can also be used by the public
- Activities with schools or communities working with environmental or educational initiatives
- Activities with people with additional needs (vulnerable and/or less-resourced groups)
- Activities promoting social justice and equal rights

- Provision of basic food, water, energy services, as well as health and sanitation services in communities
- Provision of space for meetings and events for local community groups, e.g., schools or NGOs, at no or reduced costs
- Support to infrastructure challenges (e.g., water supply), etc.

Actions/initiatives on various biodiversity and environmental protection initiatives (e.g., tree-planting, planting and restoration of green areas, natural corridor and rewilding projects, etc.) are strongly encouraged.

It is encouraged that the establishment gives its employees the opportunity to volunteer their time and services for these actions/initiatives during regular working hours, and that the establishment keeps a record of the hours that the employees have spent on volunteering.

To comply with this criterion, the establishment is actively supporting at least two actions/initiatives.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing the active support of at least two environmental or social community development actions. Furthermore, the establishment shows its record of the hours spent by employees on volunteering.

#### **4.11 The establishment offers the means for local small entrepreneurs to sell sustainable products that are based on the area's nature, history, and culture.**

To promote a sustainable local socio-cultural and economic development, and to create awareness about the establishment's corporate social responsibility, it offers the means for small local entrepreneurs to produce and sell sustainable products and services based on the nature, history and culture of the local area in the establishment.

This can be in the form of a small shop or stand within the premises of the establishment. Alternatively, the establishment can purchase and offer the local products concerned to its guests.

The products are produced locally and in a sustainable manner and based on the area's nature, history, and culture. The availability of products will depend on the business concept of the establishment.

During the audit, the establishment presents all agreements with small local entrepreneurs that sell products and services in/to the establishment. During the visual inspection, the auditor confirms that small local entrepreneurs can sell products and services in/to the establishment.

#### 4.12 The establishment has formulated a sustainable purchasing policy.

The establishment formulates and adopts a sustainable purchasing policy including the whole purchasing chain to favour environmentally and socially sustainable suppliers and products, but also to reduce unnecessary use of resources, waste and transportation.

The sustainable purchasing policy covers capital goods, food/beverages, building materials and consumables as well as services.

The sustainable purchasing policy aims to ensure a common understanding of sustainable purchasing and outlines the general requirements for sustainable purchasing to be followed by the staff of the establishment for all product purchases done through suppliers and directly by the establishment. The sustainable purchasing policy should include both environmental and social sustainability aspects.

The sustainable purchasing policy of the establishment is normally reviewed at least every third year. If the establishment is part of an international or national chain, a common sustainable purchasing policy can be formulated by the chain and shared for establishments within the same chain.

After the sustainable purchasing policy is developed, all relevant staff is informed about the policy.

During the audit, the establishment presents its sustainable purchasing policy document, and it is checked that the policy is less than three years old. The establishment should also present how the staff is informed about the policy.

#### 4.13 Discarded material/supplies are reused or collected and donated to charitable organisations.

To reduce the environmental footprint through reuse and to create awareness about the establishment's corporate social responsibility, it collects and donates materials and supplies that can still be used but that are no longer needed by the establishment to charitable organisations (e.g., organisations supporting persons in need, etc.) in order for these charities to reuse or re-sell the material/supplies.

To comply with this criterion, discarded material/supplies should have been reused, donated to charitable organisations within the previous 12-month period.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing that redundant material/supplies have been donated to charitable organisations within the last 12 months

## 5. Activities

### IMPERATIVE CRITERIA

#### **5.1 The establishment is committed to the principles of sustainable tourism. The commitment is mentioned in the establishment's Environmental Policy.**

The establishment is committed to a set of principles of sustainable tourism. Suitable principles are, for example, Metsähallitus' principles for sustainable tourism, Visit Finland's principles for sustainable tourism and/or the UN Sustainable Development Goals. When organising activities in protected areas, the establishment must always comply with the rules of protected areas.

The establishment may choose a suitable set of principles to follow according to its activities. Metsähallitus' sustainable tourism principles are suitable for operators with nature-based activities. If UN Sustainable Development Goals are adopted, the establishment should select at least three goals which are particularly relevant to its own activities.

The commitment should be applied to all staff, including subcontractors. The commitment should be mentioned in the establishment's Environmental Policy.

The set of principles the establishment is committed to and how they are reflected in the establishment's operations will be discussed during the audit.

More information:

<https://www.businessfinland.fi/suomalaisille-asiakkaille/palvelut/matkailun-edistaminen/vastuullisuus/kestavan-matkailun-periaatteet>

<https://julkaisut.metsa.fi/assets/pdf/lp/Muut/kestavamatkailu.pdf>,

<https://julkaisut.metsa.fi/assets/pdf/lp/Esitteet/kestavan-matkailun-periaatteet.pdf>

#### **5.2 The establishment is committed to complying with the regulations concerning activities in nature, and clearly communicates this commitment to its customers. The commitment is mentioned in the establishment's Environmental Policy.**

The establishment must be familiar with the legislation and ordinances relevant to its operations concerning activities in nature on both national and regional levels which are, e.g. the Nature Conservation Act, the Everyman's Rights, and regulations concerning protected areas. In addition, the establishment should commit to recommendations that apply to their activities, such as tour etiquette, litter-free camping, zero-waste mindset, ec. The

commitment applies to all staff, including subcontractors. The commitment must be mentioned in Environmental Policy.

The establishment must instruct its customers before, during and/or after the trip on how to act responsibly in nature. The instructions can be delivered in oral, written, or pictorial form, choosing the most appropriate way for each activity.

Attach a list of relevant laws and regulations, and a plan on how are included in staff induction. During the audit, the auditor will discuss how the establishment is committed to the regulations, how the regulations are communicated to customers and taken into account in staff induction.

Attachment, also documentation in the Green Activities folder.

### **5.3 The establishment has developed a safety plan including risk assessment for all the itineraries it offers. Customers must be informed about the major GPS coordinates of the routes (start/end point, refreshment points, turning points), mobile phone coverage and emergency numbers.**

The establishment must develop safety plans with risk assessment for all its itineraries. The risk assessment must include the types of risks, their causes, preventions, proactive measures in the event of an accident, as well as other aspects relevant to safety concerns. The safety plan is prepared in compliance with the legislation and takes into account the particular features of the itinerary itself. The safety plan should also indicate which third party will be informed about the route prior to excursions. Pictures/maps and the major GPS coordinates of the route should be included in the route planning.

For application, at least one (1) safety plan for the summer season and one (1) safety plan for the winter season including route description with GPS coordinates must be submitted.

The auditor will discuss how safety is considered as part of the itineraries, how it is communicated to customers and how customers are instructed to act in the event of an emergency.

2 safety plans attached to the application.

### **5.4 The establishment describes the routes of its outdoor activities and gives clear indication of their level of difficulty in advance. Customers are informed about essential equipment for participating in the activity safely.**

The route and difficulty level of each itinerary (e.g. accessible, easy, moderate, challenging etc.) must be described verbally or with the use of symbols. The information must be

displayed and accessible to customers before making a purchase decision. For customised itineraries, this information should be communicated during the quotation stage.

The establishment may for example make use of the route classification system of The Outdoor Association of Finland (Suomen Latu) and/or the guidelines for accessible nature of The Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities (Invalidiliitto).

The essential gear included/excluded in the tour price must be communicated to customers before the trip. The information must be available in languages understood by customers.

Provide a link to the itinerary description. It should contain a description of the trip, its difficulty level and essential gear included /excluded.

More information on route classification (in Finnish):

<https://www.suomenlatu.fi/vaikuta/sina-voit-vaikuttaa/vinkkeja-ulkoilupaikkojen-suunnitteluun/reittiluokitus.html>

## **5.5 The establishment ensures that the staff are well acquainted with the area as well as local customs, traditions, and conditions. The establishment works closely with local stakeholders.**

When planning activities, indigenous culture, local traditions, and local residents' privacy must be respected. Relevant information and conditions of the activity area should be familiar to the staff. The staff induction plan should include a section on the activity area, local conditions, and local/indigenous culture. The plan should also cover the roles and responsibilities of local stakeholders.

The establishment must establish whom to report to and what to do if shortcomings/ signs of deterioration or danger are encountered in the area. These may be, for example, deficiencies in picnic areas, unauthorized campfires, broken structures etc. The reporting methods could be, for example, contacting the nature centres, site administrators or authorities or the local guide group. The staff should be aware of the communication procedure, and up-to-date contact numbers should be saved in the guide's phone during activities.

The staff induction plan should be kept in the Green Activities folder. The plan should ensure the staff's knowledge of local conditions and activities offered.

In the audit, the inclusion of local conditions as well as cultural aspects in the staff induction plan will be discussed.

Documentation in the Green Activities folder.

**5.6 The establishment encourages its customers to extend their stay and make use of other facilities and activities offered in the area by providing additional information on the destination, its attractions and activities in advance.**

Additional information on the area, its cultural activities or local attractions should be available on the establishment's website, booking or confirmation page. At least a link directing to the website of the nearest tourist area or municipality should be available.

The fulfilment of the criterion will be discussed during the audit and the availability of information will be checked in the establishment website.

**5.7 The guides have appropriate professional training or equivalent working experience and knowledge of activities offered. All guides have up-to-date first aid skills.**

The establishment must keep up-to-date records of the training and/or working experience of each guide in the Green Activities folder or HR folder. Suitable training includes but is not limited to wilderness or nature guide training and urban or cultural guide training. Professional training can be replaced by relevant working experience or skills derived from hobbies. The level of staff competence may vary according to their roles and tasks, but the establishment must ensure that every task is handled by staff with sufficient experience and qualifications. It is also recommended that the experience and/ or professional training of guides are mentioned on the establishment website, itinerary descriptions, or the establishment's Sustainability Policy.

Each member of guiding staff must have a valid first aid certificate (at least EA1 or similar). Depending on the activity offered as well as the conditions, EA2 level first aid certificate may also be recommended.

Relevant documents related to staff training should be kept in the Green Activities or HR folder. They include the names and qualifications of guides as well as their first aid certificates.

In the audit, the list of staff and their qualifications in the Green Activities folder/ HR folder will be reviewed and discussed.

Documentation in the Green Activities folder.

**5.8 Everyman's rights and responsibilities are communicated to customers.**

Everyman's Rights and responsibilities are explained to the guests during activities, or a link to Everyman's Rights is shown on the establishment website, <https://www.luontoon.fi/retkietiketti>. They can also be explained during breaks, in huts, in changing room, at rental shops, on booking confirmation pages or on rental gears.

When conducting activities in the urban environment, communication about everyman's rights may be replaced by other environmental-friendly and sustainable practices, e.g. adopting environmentally friendly/ ecological practices and materials, or using sustainable products.

The means of communication may be chosen based on the establishment's operations, but it may be e.g. through printed materials, QR codes, websites, oral communications at the beginning of the event.

During the audit, the criterion will be discussed and reviewed.

### **5.9 The establishment is committed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in its area of operation. Establishment staff understand the importance of biodiversity and are able to explain it to customers.**

The establishment must be clearly committed to maintaining and supporting biodiversity through communication as well as concrete actions. In all its activities, the establishment must take biodiversity into account, communicating this to its customers as clearly as possible. All staff must understand the importance of biodiversity and be able to explain the values and special features of nature as well as the critical linkage between biodiversity and the activity area to the guests.

Supporting biodiversity may be achieved through environmental practices or environmental management actions such as setting up and maintaining birdhouses, eradicating alien species or participating in small-scale restoration works of streams, meadows or other sensitive natural areas.

The establishment must inform its customers about the importance of biodiversity protection,

and encourage them to get involved in maintaining and increasing it. Information may be shared with customers as part of itineraries, during rest breaks, or through the establishment's website or social media accounts.

In the audit, the implementation of the criterion will be discussed.

**5.10 The establishment must follow all regulations and instructions related to making fires in compliance with Everyman's Rights and Forest Fire Warnings. In all its activities, the establishment must strive to prevent forest fires.**

If campfires are lit as part of the activity, Forest Fire Warnings must always be checked in advance and complied with.

Prior to self-guided trips, customers must be informed about Forest Fire Warning and instructed to comply with the restrictions. Fire prevention information should also be displayed in rental shops, using appropriate channels such as verbal instructions, posters, or leaflets.

Instructions on checking and adhering to Forest Fire Warnings should be included in the staff induction plan. They should include where to check the Forest Fire Warning information, who is responsible for checking, what is the contingency plan for starting a fire if a warning is in effect, and how this shall be communicated to customers. These instructions can be, for example, a note in the briefing folder.

The implementation documents should be kept in the Green Activities folder. During the audit, the criterion will be discussed and the guidance in the Green Activities folder reviewed.

Documentation in the Green Activities folder.

**5.11 The establishment regularly monitors the impacts of its activities on the natural environment. If necessary, observed negative impacts are reported to the authorities and routes are changed.**

The establishment has a clear procedure for monitoring the negative impacts of its activities on the natural environment. Such impacts may include for example trail degradation, soil erosion, littering, water pollution, disturbing wildlife, illegal plant picking).

Monitoring must take place regularly, annually/ seasonally according to activity.

Monitoring may be carried out by staff observation during regular activities or through area surveys. The establishment must establish a channel for directly reporting the observed environmental impacts to the managing/ supervising authorities/landowners. The establishment must be prepared to alter the routes used even in the middle of the season if negative environmental impacts are considered severe.

During the audit, the implementation of the criterion will be discussed.

### **5.12 The establishment uses reusable tableware.**

When catering for guests or staff, reusable tableware must be used. Single-use tableware may only be used in exceptional circumstances such as large events, but in those cases, the establishment must choose biodegradable products. The establishment must also ensure that the resulting waste is separated and recycled appropriately.

The audit will review the tableware used. If necessary, the disposable products will be checked to ensure compliance.

### **5.13 The establishment must use eco-labelled detergents as well as tissue papers. Detergents must be used in an environmentally friendly way.**

All detergents as well as tissue papers for customer and staff use must be eco-labelled. Detergents include hand soap, shampoo, dishwashing liquids and general cleaning detergents, e.g. sanitary detergents or surface cleaning substances. Tissue papers include toilet papers and kitchen rolls.

Napkins, wet wipes, personal hygiene products as well as disinfectants used in accordance with regulations are excluded from this criterion. However, it is recommended that eco-labelled and/ or biodegradable products are used if available.

The establishment must ensure proper dosage and usage of detergents, especially when used in the nature.

Attach to the application a list of detergents and tissue papers in use, as well as their eco-labels. The eco-label must be awarded by a third party, such as The Nordic Swan (Joutsenmerkki) or the EU-Ecolabel (EU-kukka).

Attached in the application.

### **5.14 The establishment aims to minimise all waste generated by its activities, as well as sorting and recycling it in accordance with the Municipal Waste Regulations. The establishment instructs its customers on handling and sorting waste properly, as well as advising on the location of toilets in nature.**

The establishment must sort and recycle the waste generated by its activities in accordance with the Municipal Waste Regulations. To avoid overloading recycling points in national parks/ remote areas, it is recommended that the produced waste is transported to recycling points as close as possible to urban or municipal centres.

At rental shops, customers are instructed to recycle their waste at the rental shop's own recycling point or the nearest municipal facility. If the activity takes place indoors, the

establishment can make use of the existing property recycling points. If recycling facilities in the activity area are limited, waste recycling must be carried out in other ways.

Attach documents to the application, for example, photos of the recycling points/ sorting instructions in use/ photos showing how waste recycling will be implemented in different itineraries. You can refer to the Outdoor Etiquette Guidelines for Litter-free hiking (<https://www.nationalparks.fi/hikinginfinland/visitorguidelines/litter>) or sorting instructions from your own municipality.

Attached in the application.

### **5.15 Motorised vehicles must be quiet and produce low emissions. Motorised activities must be conducted along marked trails.**

The establishment must use environmentally friendly vehicles in all the activities it offers to its customers. Environmentally friendly vehicles include electric snowmobiles and four-stroke snowmobiles, electric ATVs, electric kickboards, electric outboard motors, four-stroke outboard motors of maximum 20 hp, and low-emission electric/hybrid boats. In the coming years, new types of environmentally friendly motor vehicles may become available along with technological advances.

All motorised activities must take place along marked trails. These include public and private roads, snowmobile trails and (in some cases) bike paths.

This criterion does not apply to electric bicycles. Similarly, essential transfers and service transport are excluded from this restriction. However, the need for motorised transfers should always be considered carefully, and they should be carried out as environmentally friendly as possible. Low-noise and low-emission motor vehicles are also recommended for transfers and service runs. If motor vehicles are used mainly for transfers, the motor vehicles must not be emphasised in the marketing materials, itinerary description or name.

Report the number of motor vehicles used as well as their power source (electric/ petrol/diesel) in the report template.

During the audit, the fulfilment of the criterion will be discussed.

Attached in the application.

### **5.16 Motorized activities constitute maximum 50% of all itineraries offered during any given season.**

The total number of activities using motor vehicles accounts for a maximum of 50% of total number of itineraries offered for the season. The calculation is based on the availability of

itineraries in different seasons on the establishment website, however, the assessment also considers the volume of each itinerary and how the establishment markets the itineraries to their customers.

This restriction does not apply to fully electric vehicles powered by 100% renewable energy.

Approved motor vehicles for other uses, e.g. for essential transfers or service transports, have been specified in criterion 4.15.

Please report the percentage of motorized activities of all activities offered for the season and add a link to the activity webpage. When necessary, a certificate of renewable energy in use should also be attached to the application.

During the audit, the criterion will be discussed, and the activities offered on the establishment website will be checked.

### **5.17 The establishment does not offer activities that aim to attract wild animals for photography and/or observation by playing sounds, feeding, or otherwise interfering with their natural movement.**

Non-disruptive wildlife watching activities include, for example, birdwatching and photographing wildlife in its natural habitat. In any wildlife watching activity, Nature Conservation Act and industry best practices must always be adhered to. Special attention should be paid to not disturbing birds during the nesting season.

Birdlife Finland's guidelines for birdwatching:

<https://www.birdlife.fi/lintuharrastus/havainnoi-huomaavisesti/>

This criterion does not apply to activities using semi-domesticated reindeer.

During the audit, activities that include wildlife watching or photography will be discussed.

## **GUIDELINE CRITERIA**

**5.18 The establishment does not offer any motorized activities.**

**5.19 The establishment encourages its guests to travel to the area using environmentally friendly means.**

5.20 The establishment monitors the total number of visitors to the area. The establishment is committed to informing relevant authorities if it notices signs of overcrowding and negative impacts of tourism on local environment or culture.

5.21 The establishment works in collaboration with local communities and offers local inhabitants and visitors opportunities to contribute to the maintenance and development of the area. Feedback from the local community is actively collected.

5.22 The establishment encourages its guests to use eco-labelled products and services.

5.23 The establishment does not use any single-use tableware.

5.24 Locally produced/organic foodstuffs and ingredients are regularly used in catering offered to the guests.

5.25 Guests are encouraged with concrete actions to pick up trash during the tour or after it.

5.26 When designing new tours and choosing their meet-up/finishing points, the timetables and routes of public transport are considered.

5.27 The establishment is committed to the principles of responsible and ethical Sámi tourism and communicates this in its responsibility policy and/or website.

5.28 The establishment has a charging station for electric cars.

5.29 Member(s) of staff have received the voluntary tourism safety training provided by the Finnish National Rescue Association (SPEK).

5.30 Member(s) of staff are trained as /are training to become wilderness guides.

5.31 Member(s) of staff are trained as /are training to become registered National Park guides.

5.32 When promoting activities, the carbon footprint of each tour is presented. The calculation tool and method (included/excluded emission sources) are clearly communicated.

## 6. Tourism animal welfare

### SLED DOGS

#### IMPERATIVE CRITERIA

6.1 Each dog has a safe doghouse that provides adequate warmth and aeration. The doghouse floor must be elevated and insulated against cold, and it mustn't become submerged during snow melting time. Doghouses must be equipped with sufficient bedding, especially in the winter. The doghouses must be regularly cleaned and disinfected annually.

6.2 The enclosures are cleaned at least once a day.

6.3 The dogs are kept in a safe enclosure. The grouping of dogs is planned keeping in mind the specific needs of each individual. The maximum number of adult dogs kept in the same enclosure is 4.

6.4 The kennel is under 24/7 surveillance. In the premises of the kennel or in its immediate surroundings, there must always be at least one person who can get to the site within 20 minutes if necessary.

6.5 Dog faeces are collected to a site where their environmental impact can be managed, e.g. an area with a compacted bottom or a transportable container. There is a management plan for the final treatment and disposal of the faeces that prevents leakage of seepage water into groundwater.

6.6 The harnesses are clean, intact and fitting. Tuglines must be covered (not made of bare wire). When necessary, additional equipment is used, e.g. booties and coats. Coats must be wind-proof and lined. On overnight trips, dogs should have lined coats for sleeping outdoors.

6.7 The equipment for transporting dogs must be in good shape, safe and undergo regular check-ups.

6.8 The staff has written instructions for feeding the dogs. High-quality feed is used (minimum fat content 15 %, minimum protein content 30 %). In the winter season, the dogs must receive food at least 2 x day, one of these may be in liquid form.

6.9 The staff has written instructions for watering the dogs. In the winter, this must take place at least twice a day, during non-frost months water must be available at all times. Dogs must be given liquids, eating snow does not replace watering. During warm weather, water in bowls must be replaced minimum twice a day.

6.10 Dogs receive regular exercise throughout the year, weather conditions permitting. Outside of sledding season, the dogs are given exercise at least 16 times a month, minimum 45 min at a time. Exercise may be in the form of pulling, walking on leash or in a walker or moving freely in a run that is at least 500m<sup>2</sup>. The maximum temperature for pulling exercises is +15/ +20 C° depending on breed. Exceptions may be granted if it doesn't risk the wellbeing of the dogs. On short-coated breeds, coats must be used when the temperature, including wind chill factor, falls below -25 C°.

6.11 The dogs are exercised and used for work bearing in mind each individual's physical condition and eagerness to work. A log is kept on exercise, work and rest days. During the season, the dogs must have at least 8 rest days/month.

6.12 The establishment has formulated and described in writing guidelines for how each dog's eagerness to work is monitored. Dogs may not be forced to work in any way.

6.13 Lead dogs are never fastened solely by the collar/ neckline in order to keep the team straight.

6.14 A dog must be at least 1 year old before it starts to work.

6.15 Training is started at least 3 months before carrying out full-length tours.

6.16 The kennel has a plan for the retirement/re-homing of dogs for when they no longer can work / if they aren't suitable for sledding.

6.17 For each dog, at least the following information is logged: pedigree, health details, medication, vaccinations and de-worming, training, behaviour, breeding, retirement, euthanasia.

6.18 Each dog must be fitted with a microchip (dogs that were born/acquired after September 2021), vaccinated and dewormed, and its health must be regularly monitored. Nails must be regularly trimmed also during the off-season months.

6.19 The establishment has an emergency plan in case of dogs getting injured. The plan must include:

- Rescue plan to evacuate dogs from the kennel (in case of fire etc)
- Written instructions on taking care of the dogs in case of regular personnel getting injured/ill ( e.g. recognising individual dogs etc)
- Contact information for the nearest/regular veterinarians must be easily available to all staff members
- Plan on how an injured dog can be transported to a veterinary clinic

6.20 The kennel must be equipped with a first aid kit for dogs and the possibility of placing sick/injured dogs indoors (e.g. at home or in a convalescence pen with 24/7 surveillance).

6.21 The establishment has a written policy for putting down dogs. The policy must include the acceptable grounds for euthanasia as well as a procedure for disposal of the remains. It is recommended that euthanasia is only performed by a veterinarian. Healthy and fit litters born accidentally may not be put down. Instead, efforts must be made to find them a home.

6.22 A log must be kept of all dogs that have died/been put down in the kennel, including the cause of death/euthanasia. In case of suspected infectious disease, an autopsy must be performed. If a dog is shot it mustn't be done in front of other dogs.

6.23 The breeding of dogs is planned and logged. Accidentally produced litters are avoided by all possible means. Healthy and fit to live accidental litters are not put down. Instead, efforts are made to find them a home.

6.24 There must be an indoor whelping area that provides a stress-free, dry, and warm place for the bitch and the pups apart from other dogs.

6.25 Pups and young dogs must be socialised and taught to interact with people and other dogs. During the audit, the establishment explains how socialisation is taken care of and monitored. By careful teaching and socialising of young dogs many kinds of problem behaviour can be avoided or minimised.

6.26 The staff consists of animal tourism professionals who have either a degree from a vocational training institute or several years of working experience. In case trainees are used, they must never be solely in charge for looking after the dogs or carrying out activities.

6.27 The establishment ensures that all its employees, trainees and volunteers are covered by insurance against injury.

6.28 The establishment has a training plan that ensures that all personnel working with animals are aware of animal welfare related issues.

6.29 The establishment has a plan in case of injury/death of owners/kennel manager. The plan must indicate who will take responsibility for the operations in case the owners cannot do it.

6.30 The establishment communicates to its customers regarding animal welfare and has a plan for this communication.

6.31 Commitment to animal welfare is mentioned in the establishment's responsibility policy (Green Activities criterium 1.3.).

## GUIDELINE CRITERIA

6.32 The dog run/exercise area includes a cooling pool or sprinkler.

6.33 The kennel has a run of at least 1000 m<sup>2</sup> or an automatic walker.

6.34 No dogs are kept in chains.

6.35 The dog enclosures are at least 1,5 times the minimum size dictated by law.

6.36 Dogs are provided with stimuli (elevated platforms/climbing structures, searching for treats, fetching ball, learning tricks or similar) in the enclosures or dog run.

6.37 On overnight safaris, all dogs have an insulated, sheltered sleeping place (doghouse or similar).

6.38 During off-season, dogs have the possibility to exercise/ run free every day (weather conditions allowing).

6.39 Training is started at least 3 months before the start of the season.

6.40 Retired, healthy dogs remain in the kennel, or the establishment has an adoption or sponsoring programme so that guests can commit to taking care of the expenses of retired dogs. If the establishment has an adoption programme, it must include rehabilitation to indoor living as well as instructing and minimum 6 months of monitoring of adoptive homes. If the adoptive home cannot keep the dog, the kennel must be committed to either taking it back to the kennel or finding it a new home.

6.41 All dogs that retired within the past 12 months have either been placed in the kennel, given to adoption or a sponsor paying for their expenses has been found.

6.42 Dog faeces are composted in a centralised manner or delivered to a biogas factory if there is one in the area.

6.43 Staff are permanently living within the premises or in the immediate vicinity of the kennel.

6.44 During safaris, one guide is responsible for maximum 6 teams.

6.45 All staff taking care of dogs have a professional degree from animal husbandry, wilderness guiding or other relevant field.

6.46 All staff participating in safaris are employed by the establishment (no unpaid volunteers or trainees are used in carrying out safaris).

6.47 All trainees are students of veterinary science, animal husbandry or wilderness guiding.

6.48 The kennel manager and/or staff participate annually in training and seminars on working dog health, nutrition, training, or breeding.