



STEP SNAPSHOT

Since it was first published in 2003 and publicly launched in 2007, Sustainable Travel International's Sustainable Tourism Eco-certification Program™ (STEP) has represented leadership in the travel and tourism industry. This second edition enables travel companies to be certified at 5 different levels. For more information, please review the [STEP Rating System](#).

KEY AREAS OF STEP

The required criteria in the STEP standard cover a variety of business practices including but not limited to sustainability policy, waste and water management, energy efficiency and conservation, hazardous substance management, cultural heritage preservation, and economic development. Because STEP is designed for multiple sectors in the travel and tourism industry, some of the following required criteria may not be applicable.

SAMPLE CRITERIA

BUSINESS MODEL

Policy, Metrics and Transparency

The company has a written sustainability policy that incorporates the following minimum criteria: a) includes a commitment to continual improvement where both corrective and preventative management actions needed to ensure continuous improvement are monitored and critically analyzed; b) includes a commitment to comply with applicable legal requirements and with other requirements to which the company subscribes which relate to its environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects; c) provides the framework for setting and reviewing environmental, economic, and socio-cultural objectives and targets; d) is documented; e) is available to the public; and f) is communicated to all persons working for or on behalf of the company.

Objective: To create the intention and guidelines for developing a sustainable business.

GUEST EXPERIENCE

Education - Use of Feedback From Clients

The company has documentation or has a system for documenting the total number of customer complaints and compliments received annually as a percentage of the total number of trips operated and/or client overnight stays.

Objective: To establish a measuring system for an important indicator of success related to client satisfaction with quality of experience and sustainability claims.

WORKPLACE PRACTICES

Health & Safety – Regulation

The company maintains an up-to date register of documentation for all required environmental, health and safety, licenses, operational permits and approvals and has obtained all required licenses, operational permits and approvals for each of the regions where the company operates.

Objective: To ensure that the company operates within the established laws in regions of operation.

Health & Safety – Professional Development

The company documents the total hours of any employee training as a percentage of total employee working hours per annum.

Objective: To ensure that the company trains its employees to support their professional development.

OPERATIONS

Regulatory

The company has provided a signed affidavit that it has not willfully violated any applicable environmental regulations in the past 12 months.

Objective: Ensure compliance to environmental laws and regulations.

Waste/Contamination – Recycling/Reuse

The company documents the percentage of recyclables diverted from or going into the waste stream through periodic waste stream audits or by documenting the annual cubic volume (or weight) of recyclables as a percentage of the total cubic volume (or weight) of solid waste going to landfill.

Objective: To establish a baseline of recycled material diverted from landfill.

Chemicals – Chemical Mgmt System

The company documents the total annual volume of non-toxic biodegradable chemicals / cleaning products as a percentage of the total volume of chemicals / cleaning products used.

Objective: To reduce chemical exposure to clients, employees and the environment by measuring non toxic chemicals used.

Waste Water – Water Mgmt

The company has a system to document and track the annual volume of potable water used. This includes the utilization of cisterns (i.e., underground tanks for storing rainwater) and alternative water sources (such as rainwater).

Objective: To track and reduce the amount of potable water used.

Construction - Building

Design and construction of any new company buildings and infrastructure reflects the natural or cultural heritage in design and respects local land rights in siting, impact assessment, and acquisition.

Objective: To support green building design and construction by reflecting the natural and cultural heritage and respecting land rights.

PURCHASING

Policy – Organizational Preferences

The company documents the total monetary value of recycled / eco-friendly products and the total monetary value of all products purchased.

Objective: To reduce environmental impacts by integrating ecological considerations into purchasing decisions.

Policy – Policy and Service Suppliers

The company documents the total number of sustainable tourism certified businesses utilized in company operations annually as a percentage of the total number of service providers utilized. Also, the company documents the total value of tourism-related products or services purchased from certified sustainable tourism service providers annually as a percentage of all tourism-related products or services purchased annually. In addition, if the company has subsidiary operations, it documents the percentage of its subsidiary operations certified out of the total number of its subsidiary operations.

Objective: To develop a baseline measurement of service provider businesses that have been certified to a sustainable tourism standard.

Policy – Supplier Mgt--Paper

The company documents the volume of post-consumer recycled paper purchased as a percentage of the total annual volume of paper purchased. The company also documents the percentage of post-consumer recycled content in the paper it utilizes.

Objective: To form a baseline of paper related environmental impact by measuring use of post consumer recycled paper.

Policy – Supplier Mgt--Feedback

The company has documentation or has a system for documenting the total number of compliments and / or complaints received from service providers and local and / or indigenous people regarding its products and / or services.

Objective: To build a base level of satisfaction from clients and locals in areas of operations.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE MANAGEMENT

Energy Reduction Plan

The company documents the annual electricity and fuel used for its operations, by fuel type and unit of measurement: 1) Electricity; 2) Diesel or Petroleum Fuel; 3) Bio Fuel; 4) Liquid Petroleum Gas; 5) Renewable Energy including solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, small-scale hydro energy, or methane-based system; 6) Other Energy or Fuel use.

Objective: To establishing a baseline of energy use in order to reduce energy consumption and associated greenhouse gas emissions over time.

GHG Emissions and Offsets

The company documents its total net annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory from business-related energy consumption (i.e., office and business-related operations - not client related), using a nationally or internationally accepted GHG calculator or protocol.

Objective: To develop a baseline measurement that will allow for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions related to office and business related operations (not client related).

Energy Efficient and Ecologically Responsible Vehicles

The company documents the total number of services required by the manufacturer (required routine maintenance and repairs) and the total number of services completed on all company land-based motorized vehicles utilized in operations to manufacturer's recommendations annually.

Objective: To reduce vehicle pollution and maximize energy efficiency.

Energy Efficient and Ecologically Responsible Water Craft

The company documents the total number of services required by the manufacturer (required routine maintenance and repairs) and the total number of services completed on all of the motor boats utilized in company operations to manufacturer's recommendations annually.

Objective: To reduce motorized boat pollution and maximize energy efficiency.

Energy Efficient and Ecologically Responsible Air Craft

The company documents the total number of services required by the manufacturer (required routine maintenance and repairs) and the total number of services completed on all of the aircraft utilized in company operations to manufacturer's recommendations annually.

Objective: To reduce aircraft related pollution and maximize energy efficiency.

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

Awareness

The company has developed and implemented a policy against illegal, abusive or exploitive forms of tourism such as child prostitution. The policy has been communicated to its employees, service providers and clients.

Objective: Eliminate the exploitation of humans in activities related to the company.

Community Contribution – Measurement/Metric

The company documents measures of direct benefits to host communities including: a) The percentage of employees living within a 10-km radius from the company's domestic work place(s); b) The percentage of employees living within a 20-km radius from the company's international work place(s); c) The lowest hourly domestic wage and the legal minimum hourly domestic wage; d) Total donations or in-kind contributions to cultural-heritage or local community projects. In addition, the company measures its indirect economic benefits to host communities by determining total value of locally produced products and / or services purchased from locally owned businesses.

Objective: To measure the direct and indirect benefits to local communities.