



# System Requirements for Certificate Holders

Standard for  
Sustainable Travel Activities





System Requirements for Certificate Holders - Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities	
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## Introduction and scope

This document outlines the requirements for systems and procedures that must be in place and operational at any organisation applying for or holding a Preferred by Nature Sustainable Travel Certification.

The requirements herein are normative and will be used together with the Preferred by Nature Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities to assess conformity and determine certification eligibility of any audited tourism organisation or activity.

This document is part of the normative requirements of the Preferred by Nature Certification for Sustainable Travel Activities as stated in box 1 below:

### **Box 1: Preferred by Nature Certification for Sustainable Travel Activities**

#### **List of normative documents:**

- **STP-01 Preferred by Nature Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities**  
Contains the requirements applicable to any tourism organisation or activity seeking to evaluate, measure and improve its sustainability performance and achieve Preferred by Nature Certification for Sustainable Travel Activities. This covers both, large scale and small-scale operations including accommodations, tour operators, touristic centres or attractions and tourism multisite organisations and groups.
- **STP-02 System Requirements for Certificate Holders**  
Requirements for systems and procedures that must be in place and operational to determine the existence of the formal sustainability management system required by the Preferred by Nature Certification for Sustainable Travel Activities.
- **STP-03 Terms and Definitions**  
Normative document that contains definitions and concepts as they are used in the Preferred by Nature Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities.

## Version history

Version 0.92, 03 April 2023

## Terms and definitions

### **Procedure**

The established way of doing a series of actions. In the Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities context, the required procedures describe how systems are intended to work.

### **Scope**

Scope defines the boundaries of the organisations in terms of management models applied, services, activities, sites and destinations included, as well as claims allowed or covered.

### **Site**

A single functional unit of a tourism organisation (physical or virtual) or a single geographical location with clear boundaries within which services are planned, delivered and/or provided to visitors or customers.

### Sustainability Management System (SMS)

In terms of the Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities, a Sustainability Management System (SMS) is the combination of necessary defined policies, processes, procedures, instructions, software, data, communications and etc., that works towards meeting the requirements of this standard and other applicable normative documents.

### Top Management:

Person or group of people who directs and controls the organisation at the highest level. In the context of this Standard, top management shall have control over all sites, entities and *outsourced* operations included in the scope.

## 1. Scope

### Requirements

### Guidance

- 1.1.** The Organisation shall define and document the scope of the products, services and activities provided and sites included in the scope of the certification.

Depending on the type of entity and activities being evaluated, the scope of the certification can be defined by a range of attributes, such as:

- Legal entities, physical offices, facilities and/or properties
- When applicable, listing of sites, members and subcontractors, including their geolocation data
- Products, brands, services and activities included
- Transportation vehicles of any type used for service provision and operations
- Applicable legal framework
- If applicable, Suppliers
- Destination(s) where services are operated and/or delivered

- 1.2.** Any change of scope shall be documented and communicated to Preferred by Nature as relevant.

Changes to the scope should be documented and available to auditors. Also, any changes to the scope of operations, such as the inclusion of new facilities, services, products or suppliers; or when applicable, the addition of new sites or members, must be communicated to Preferred by Nature and verified before inclusion in the scope.

- 1.3.** If the scope covers multiple entities/properties, the Organisation ensures compliance of those entities/properties with all applicable requirements.

If the scope of the certification covers different entities, which may or may not be individual legal entities, it is the responsibility of the certificate holder to ensure that all entities/properties meet all applicable certification requirements. This includes multisite and group certification, and any case where certain activities are outsourced to third parties.

## 2. Responsibilities and competence

Requirements	Guidance
2.1. A position is defined with overall responsibility for conformance with all applicable requirements.	<p>One responsible position or unit must be appointed as having the overall task of ensuring that all relevant requirements are met for the whole scope of the certification process.</p> <p>For multisite and group certification, this responsibility falls in the Central Function or Group Manager.</p>
2.2. The responsible position (and other designated staff) have sufficient authority and resources to ensure that requirements are met.	<p>To ensure efficient implementation of the requirements, the Organisation must delegate authority (from top management) and provide sufficient resources to the responsible position or unit to make sure that certification requirements are being met consistently and that necessary changes are implemented and maintained.</p>
2.3. Individual responsibilities for relevant requirements are defined and known.	<p>The Organisation has allocated responsibilities to designated staff.</p> <p>For medium and larger entities, documented job descriptions exist for all staff responsible for the Organisation's implementation of the certification requirements, which includes the competency and authority required for the position.</p> <p>Organisational charts can clearly show relevant staff responsibilities.</p>
2.4. Staff and workers, including contractors and seasonal workers, demonstrate awareness of and competence in all aspects of fulfilling the requirements relevant to their position and role.	<p>All staff and workers are aware of their roles and how these contribute to the organisation in meeting all the applicable certification requirements.</p> <p>Relevant training and education needs are assessed, and capacity-building activities (technical, operational and sustainability) are planned and implemented.</p> <p>Periodic training include environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health, safety, risk and crisis management topics allowing staff to fulfill their tasks and duties, improve their competencies and experience and gain opportunities for advancement.</p>

### 3. Systems, procedures and records

#### Requirements

#### Guidance

- 3.1.** Systems are established and implemented to achieve and maintain conformance with all applicable requirements. The systems shall be adequate and proportionate to the size and complexity of operations.

The tourism organisation is implementing a long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its size and scope, addresses environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health, safety, risk and crisis management issues and drives continuous improvement.

To ensure and guide the effective and long-term implementation of its sustainability management system, the organisation must have a documented and implemented sustainability policy with clear goals and objectives that are suitable to its size and operational scope.

The sustainability policy must be the baseline for the development of all written operational policies, programmes, plans and procedures necessary to consistently implement and improve the sustainability management system.

Staff must be engaged with the development, implementation and/or continuous improvement of the sustainability management system and the sustainability policy.

Very small operations (e.g., single-family operations) may have a written commitment towards sustainability but it should be clear which other elements such as procedures, work instructions, software, etc., work together to achieve compliance.

- 3.2.** Procedures covering the specified scope and all applicable requirements, including identifying and addressing non-conformances, shall be established, implemented and kept updated.

Procedures should be developed as appropriate for the size and complexity of the organisation. Small-size entities may have very short and simple procedures.

Tourism organisations are expected to have in place updated and formal operational policies, programmes, plans and procedures necessary to consistently implement the sustainability management system and deliver their services.

## Requirements

- 3.3.** Relevant information, records, documents, workers, locations or entities (including members, suppliers and sub-contractors) are available for Preferred by Nature auditors to evaluate conformance.

## Guidance

Information, documents and records linked to the implementation of the sustainability management system must be kept available, both for the appropriate implementation of the system requirements and for the purpose of the certification audits.

Required records must include (but are not limited to): training and education, customer satisfaction, supply purchasing and consumption, supplier monitoring, payment of wages and other salary benefits, contributions to the community, conservation of natural and cultural sites and others relevant to the requirements of the applicable standard.

Sites, services, transportation vehicles and other facilities are accessible for inspection.

Workers, including those of suppliers and subcontractors, are available for interviews.

- 3.4.** The organisation has all relevant evidence, including records and documentation, stored and kept for a minimum of five years.

All records shall be available during audits upon request. Records that are expected to be kept and saved for a minimum of five years are those related to certification audits.

## 4. Internal performance evaluation

### Requirements

- 4.1.** Internal performance is evaluated for all entities included in the scope at least annually against the requirements of the Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities and:
- a) evaluation is documented, where appropriate to the size,
  - b) gaps or weaknesses are addressed and corrected in a timely manner.

### Guidance

Internal monitoring should cover all entities and group members/sites (where applicable). The organisation shall demonstrate how it analyses its performance against the standard, how it manages and follows up on observations and minor non-conformities and how its performance analysis is oriented towards continuous improvement.

Internal evaluation systems, documentation and intensity should be appropriate for the size and complexity of the organisation/activities.

Medium and larger tourism organisations are expected to implement a formal monitoring and evaluation system that allows them to track results, impacts and, where needed, implement corrective actions for continuous improvement of the sustainability management system.



Preferred by Nature is an international non-profit organisation working to support better land management and business practices that benefit people, nature and the climate. We do this through a unique combination of sustainability certification services, projects supporting awareness raising, and capacity building. For more than 25 years, we have worked to develop practical solutions to drive positive impacts in production landscapes and supply chains in 100+ countries. We focus on land use, primarily through the forest, agriculture and climate impact commodities, and related sectors, such as tourism and conservation.

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