



Preferred by Nature Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities

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1 Introduction

The **Preferred by Nature Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities** has been updated and redesigned to align with the **Preferred by Nature Sustainability Framework** while maintaining its alignment with the **Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Criteria**¹.

This redesign ensures that the standard remains current on issues that are critical for advancing the global sustainability agenda in the travel sector. The standard now includes a series of core requirements that encourage sustainable management and practices, which are expected to result in positive impacts for people, nature and the climate.

1.1 About Preferred by Nature

Preferred by Nature is an international, non-profit organisation founded in Denmark in 1994, working in over 100 countries with businesses, NGOs and governments to develop solutions to major global challenges such as deforestation and climate change.

Our Vision

A world where human choices ensure a sustainable future.

Our Mission

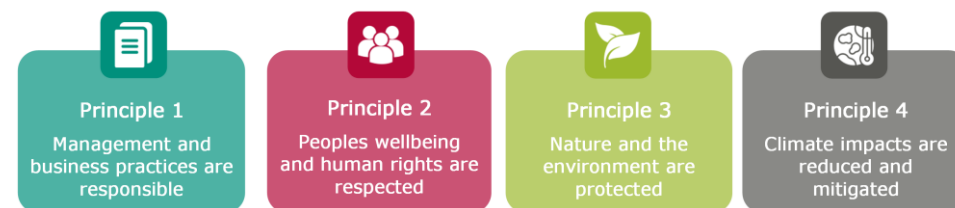
To support better land management and business practices that benefit people, nature and the climate.

1.2 About Preferred by Nature Sustainability Framework

Inspired by existing certification schemes and the need to harmonise them under a common tool that can be used as a single framework for defining and benchmarking sustainability across various sectors, the **Preferred by Nature**

Sustainability Framework covers different aspects that we believe should be considered and addressed before claiming that any activity is sustainable.

The Sustainability Framework is our definition of sustainability, setting the bar for sustainable activities across sectors and consists of four principles that are reflective of Preferred by Nature's mission:



The **Preferred by Nature Sustainability Framework** can be applied as a single evaluation tool to all sectors and commodities and is suitable for both large and small companies truly committed to sustainable business practices. However, it can also be used as the basis to develop adapted and sector-specific standards, like in the case of this Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities.

¹ GSTC review to achieve formal recognition for the new standard for sustainable travel activities will be completed during the second and third quarters of 2023.



2 Preferred by Nature standard for sustainable travel activities

The **Preferred by Nature Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities** is designed following the same structure as the **Preferred by Nature Sustainability Framework**.

It has also been benchmarked against the **Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Criteria** to ensure that this sector-specific tool is properly reflected and/or included in its content.

The outcome of this combination is organised under the four principles of the Preferred by Nature Sustainability Framework and 31 criteria that describe the expected outcomes of implementing this standard and demonstrate true commitment to sustainability at any travel activity.

The following image describes this standard structure:



2.1 Objectives

The implementation of the **Preferred by Nature Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities** seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. That certified tourism organisations improve their position and reputation in responsible travel markets, thanks to the adoption and efficient integration of sustainability as a fundamental principle of their business philosophy, management system and commercial strategies.
2. That social wellbeing, development and human rights of people and communities involved in tourism activities are protected by implementing fair, equal and legal labour practices, as well as relations that enhance and strengthen their economic activities and livelihoods.
3. That tourism activities are carried out with respect and appreciation of all cultural expressions while simultaneously emphasising the importance of preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
4. That the environment and ecosystems at tourist destinations are preserved by implementing management systems and practices that protect their integrity and biodiversity, promote the rational use of natural resources, and mitigate negative impacts.
5. That certified tourism organisations are recognised for their true commitment and genuine efforts to reduce and offset greenhouse gas emissions caused by their operations, thereby mitigating the negative impacts of the travel and tourism sector that aggravate climate change.

2.2 Scope

The **Preferred by Nature Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities** has been designed to be applicable to any tourism organisation or activity seeking to evaluate, measure and improve its sustainability performance. This covers both, large-scale and small-scale operations including:

- Accommodations
- Tour Operators
- Touristic centres or attractions

- Multisite organisations and/or groups

The standard requirements focus on the core sustainability aspects; therefore, its applicability is considered to be universal, however, the specific form of implementation of some requirements may vary depending on the type of tourism organisation or activity that is audited.

The scope of the audits carried out with this standard covers the sustainable management system, facilities (physical or virtual), means of transportation, services, workers' labour conditions and the tourism organisation's supply chain of goods and services.

Likewise, the audits carried out with this standard evaluate the collaborative relationship between the tourism organisation and the surrounding or visited communities, natural protected areas and other sites within its target or host destination(s).

2.3 Structure

This standard contains the Principles, Criteria and Indicators for setting and verifying sustainability performance at any tourism or travel activity. These are structured as follows:

Principles	Fundamental sustainability elements that are considered globally relevant.
Criteria	Sustainability topics of global relevance to be considered under each principle.
Indicators	Quantitative or qualitative parameters that can be assessed in relation to a criterion. Indicators equivalent to the GSTC Criteria are identified in the content of the standard.

2.4 The Global Sustainable Tourism Council Criteria

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) establishes and manages global standards for sustainable travel and tourism, known as the GSTC Criteria.

The GSTC Criteria forms the foundation for GSTC's role in providing assurance for impartiality and competence to certification or verification schemes that recognise hotels/accommodations, tour operators and destinations as having sustainability policies and practices in place.

GSTC does not directly certify any products or services, but it provides assurance for those that do via the GSTC-Recognition of standards and the GSTC-accreditation for certification bodies.

GSTC-Recognition of standards or GSTC Recognised means that a sustainable tourism standard or system has been confirmed equivalent to the GSTC Criteria and is administered by a standard/system owner that meets GSTC requirements.

The **Preferred by Nature Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities** is applicable to any tourism organisation, including Accommodations and Tour Operators, among others. Its content has been designed in alignment with the GSTC Criteria to maintain GSTC Recognition and ensure that its requirements do not contradict any of the GSTC Criteria clauses.

2.5 Assessment and eligibility

Any organisation seeking to achieve the Preferred by Nature Certification for Sustainable Travel Activities must undergo an initial audit called Assessment.

The Assessment is the first full evaluation performed at any certification candidate tourism organisation and allows Preferred by Nature to:

1. Independently evaluate the organisation's sustainability performance and practices against all the requirements of the applicable standard.
2. Objectively determine the level of conformity of the organisation to the requirements of all the applicable standards.
3. Make an informed and impartial certification decision regarding the eligibility of the organisation to become certified.

2.5.1 Conformity assessment

Conformity assessment of each indicator from the applicable standard can result in any of the following outcomes:

Conformity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full (without observations or comments) • With observations or comments
Nonconformity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major • Minor
Nonapplicability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case where the particular indicator is not relevant/applicable for the specific operation.

2.5.2 Conformity

Full conformity (without observations or comments) refers to the state of being in accordance with all the requirements established in the indicator. When full conformity occurs, the organisation is encouraged to maintain and improve its performance, where possible. No further action is indicated.

When the audit process identifies minor issues that are relevant but do not constitute a nonconformity, these are flagged by issuing a **Conformity with observations** or comments. Reversing the observations is not mandatory but they will be reviewed in subsequent audits to prevent them from becoming nonconformities.

Conformity

A state of being in compliance with established and required guidelines, specifications or legislation.

2.5.3 Nonconformity

Nonconformity

The non-fulfilment of the established or specified requirements

If a nonconformity is identified during any audit, it may be classified as **Major** or **Minor** and depending on this, it will have a decisive impact on whether an organisation can obtain or maintain its certification.

Major non-conformities reflect issues that affect the integrity and overall performance of the

Sustainability Management System.

If Major non-conformities are raised, these must be addressed and solved before Preferred by Nature Certification for Sustainable Travel Activities can be granted or maintained.

Minor non-conformities, on the other hand, are issues that may affect compliance with specific requirements of a particular indicator but do not affect the fundamental functions and performance of the Sustainability Management System.

If Minor non-conformities are raised, these may not affect the immediate possibility of an organisation obtaining or maintaining Preferred by Nature Certification for Sustainable Travel Activities.

Certification will still be granted when Minor non-conformities do not exceed more than 25% of all applicable indicators and as long as they are addressed and solved within a specific deadline that cannot exceed 12 months from the date these are notified.

Refer to the table below to learn about the criteria followed by auditors when grading a non-conformity, either as major or minor:

Minor Nonconformity	Major Nonconformity
Temporary lapse	Continues over a long period of time
Rare and non-systematic/non-systemic	Systematic/systemic
Impacts are limited in temporal and spatial scale	Affects a wide portion of operation
Does not result in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant requirement.	Not corrected or adequately responded to by the operation managers once it has been identified
	Will likely result in a fundamental failure to meet the requirements
	Affects the integrity and credibility of the scheme

2.5.4 Non-applicability

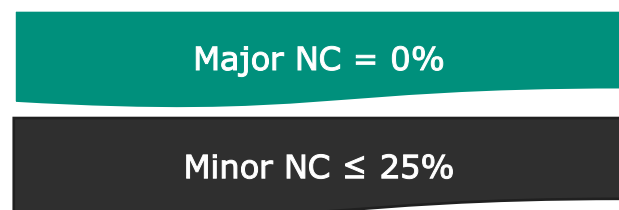
Some indicators could be classified as 'Non-applicable' to the operation. For example, if the organisation does not use firewood or other organic materials for cooking or other purposes, the indicator that refers to this topic will not

be relevant to the specific case, therefore, it will not be included as part of the scope of the corresponding audit.

2.5.5 Eligibility Requirements:

In order for any organisation to obtain or maintain the **Preferred by Nature Certification for Sustainable Travel Activities**, it must:

- Not have any **Major non-conformities** raised and open from any audit.
- If any, open **Minor non-conformities** must not exceed 25% of all the applicable indicators.



2.6 Certification Cycle and annual audits

If the tourism organisation is found to be in compliance with the eligibility requirements, a **Preferred by Nature Certificate for Sustainable Travel Activities** will be issued for a five-year term or period.

During these five years, the certified organisation will be subject to undergo four mandatory annual surveillance audits and at the end of the process, a voluntary reassessment for renewal of the certificate.

Annual audits (or annual surveillance audits) are evaluations conducted once every calendar year of the certification cycle to monitor continuous conformity of the auditee to the requirements of the applicable standard.

Annual audits must occur within 60 days prior to the certificate issuing anniversary date (the day and month that the certificate was issued).

In each annual audit it is essential to ensure that the organisation's Sustainability Management System and practices are maintained in adherence to the criteria included in the four principles of this standard.

The Scope of annual audits is to:

- Assess compliance with open Minor non-conformities from the previous audit (Assessment, annual audit).
- Follow up on indicators evaluated as Compliance with observations or comments in the previous audit and review any improvement, progress or issues identified during the audit.
- Assess continuous conformity for high-risk and key impact Indicators:
 - Risk: the possibility of non-compliance with respect to certain specific indicators due to inherent conditions of the operation. For example, if activities are carried out within protected areas or cultural heritage sites, the indicators related to these topics will always be subject to evaluation.
 - Impact: refers to indicators that must be continuously monitored and reported as they represent sustainable practices that may have negative or positive impacts on people, nature and the climate.



2.7 Supplementary requirements

In combination with the Preferred by Nature Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities, the following requirements are available and applicable to tourism organisations seeking certification against this standard:

- **STP-02 System requirements:** This document integrates essential requirements of the sustainable management system that shall be observed and met by any tourism organisation that is undergoing an evaluation process and seeks to achieve the **Preferred by Nature Certification for Sustainable Travel Activities**.
- **STP-03 Terms & definitions:** Preferred by Nature has collected definitions to clarify the interpretations of most technical terms used in the Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities. The definitions provide additional details to the requirements and must be considered normative when regarding the interpretation of the Standard indicators.

3 Communications, claims and use of the Preferred by Nature Brand

The **Preferred by Nature Certification for Sustainable Travel Activities** offers ways for organisations to communicate about and gain recognition for their progress towards meeting their sustainability commitments.

Tourism organisations that meet all the applicable Indicators of the **Preferred by Nature Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities** and offset all of their carbon emissions (including most relevant scope 3 emissions) may use the Preferred by Nature Seal and make related off- and on-product claims.

Tourism organisations that meet all the applicable Indicators of the **Preferred by Nature Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities** but do not offset all of their carbon emissions, may make claims about their achievements and use a specific logo approved for these cases, but cannot use the Preferred by Nature seal.

4 Standard for Sustainable Travel Activities

4.1 Principle 1: Management and business practices are responsible

Criterion 1.1	Land tenure and management rights are secure	GSTC
Outcome	Land tenure and management rights are secure and established for all rights holders and ensure that Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is obtained where operations may affect Indigenous Peoples or local communities' rights and resources.	✓
1.1.1	Land tenure rights are secure and registered according to legal requirements and include clear demarcation of legally gazetted boundaries.	✓
1.1.2	Land management rights are in place and registered according to legal requirements.	✓
1.1.3	Where applicable, land tenure and management rights are obtained through a process that ensures that Free, Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) is secured before any activities are commenced that may affect Indigenous Peoples' or local communities' lands, territories and resources.	✓
1.1.4	Land tenure and management rights are not divested or legally transferred to another party to avoid responsibilities for remediation, restoration or protection of High Conservation Values (HCV).	
1.1.5	In case of ongoing land tenure or management right disputes, these are managed through a culturally appropriate and transparent process, agreed upon by the affected parties.	

Criterion 1.2	Management, planning and operations are conducted responsibly	GSTC
Outcome	Management planning and operations are in accordance with legal requirements. <i>Transparent public reporting demonstrates responsible practices are being implemented to minimise negative impacts from tourism activities on people, nature and the climate.</i>	✓
1.2.1	Legal requirements related to land use, management planning and public use are complied with.	✓
1.2.2	Legal requirements related to management and operation of tourism activities, including those at natural, cultural and/or historical sites are complied with.	✓
1.2.3	Legal requirements related to the disclosure of information about environmental impacts, social responsibility practices, customer engagement efforts, reporting and verification are complied with.	✓
1.2.4	Public reports are available with information about environmental impacts, social responsibility practices, carbon emissions and customer engagement efforts to meet the sustainability policy goals.	✓
1.2.5	Guidelines and/or accepted best practices to minimise negative impacts from tourist visits or activities at surrounding or visited natural, cultural and/or historical sites are observed and complied with.	✓






Criterion 1.3	Taxes and fees are paid	GSTC
Outcome	Applicable taxes and fees have been paid in a timely manner and according to legal requirements.	✓
1.3.1	Legal requirements related to payment of royalties, land/area taxes and fees are complied with.	✓
1.3.2	Legal requirements related to payment of value-added taxes and/or other sales taxes are complied with.	✓
1.3.3	Legal requirements related to payment of corporate taxes are complied with, including profit taxes.	✓

1.3.4	Legal requirements related to payment of trade, export and/or import taxes and fees are complied with.	✓
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Criterion 1.4	Corruption, fraud and conflict of interest are avoided	GSTC
Outcome	Corruption, fraud and conflict of interests are avoided, while business integrity is ensured according to best practices.	✓
1.4.1	Legal requirements related to corruption - including bribery - fraud and conflict of interest are complied with.	✓
1.4.2	Business integrity is ensured by avoiding all forms of bribery, fraud and corruption.	
1.4.3	Conflicts of interest are identified, declared and managed.	

Criterion 1.5	Trade and procurement are legal and responsible	GSTC
Outcome	Trade and transport of products and service provision are conducted according to legal requirements and respecting principles of fairness and transparency in contractual obligations.	✓
1.5.1	Legal requirements related to export and/or import are complied with.	✓
1.5.2	Legal requirements related to offshore trading and transfer pricing are complied with.	✓
1.5.3	Legal requirements related to due diligence or due care are complied with.	✓
1.5.4	Formal purchasing and procurement practices are implemented to assess, evaluate, monitor and give preference to sustainable supplies, goods, equipment; as well as responsible service suppliers and contractors.	✓

1.5.5	Whenever these are available and of sufficient quality, preference is given to locally produced supplies and goods, as well as locally owned businesses or service providers.	✓
1.5.6	Whenever these are available and of sufficient quality, preference is given to supplies and suppliers that have an independent and reputable sustainability certification.	✓
1.5.7	Whenever these are available and of sufficient quality, preference is given to supplies purchased in bulk, reducing the use of individual packaging.	✓
1.5.8	Whenever these are available and of sufficient quality, preference is given to purchasing supplies that come in reusable, returnable and/or recyclable containers.	✓
1.5.9	Agreed payments to suppliers or service providers are made in a timely manner and receipts specifying the price, deductions and amount paid are given.	
1.5.10	Contracts with suppliers have clear, fair, legal and transparent terms, have an agreed timeframe and are not changed or cancelled unilaterally.	
1.5.11	Single-use plastics and disposables are avoided in all possible cases.	✓
1.5.12	Firewood and coal used for operations and activities come from responsibly managed sources.	✓
1.5.13	Responsible procurement practices are implemented to purchase, store and handle food supplies in order to minimise food waste.	✓
1.5.14	The purchase, use and/or sale of products, foods and/or souvenirs made from threatened or endangered species is not allowed.	✓

Criterion 1.6	Buildings, infrastructure and activities are developed and maintained in a responsible manner	GSTC
Outcome	<i>Planning, siting, design, construction, renovation, operation and demolition of buildings and infrastructure are managed responsibly, reducing any negative impacts for the environment and the local community.</i>	
1.6.1	Legal requirements and applicable codes for construction and development of buildings, tourism-related facilities and activities are complied with.	
1.6.2	Specific measures are taken to prevent any development of infrastructure and/or activities that produce alterations to natural, historical, archaeological, cultural and/or sacred heritage sites.	
1.6.3	Operation of buildings, tourism-related facilities and activities is continuously assessed to minimise adverse impacts on people, the environment and cultural heritage.	
1.6.4	Maintenance of buildings, tourism-related facilities and activities ensure their integrity and function, while minimising impacts on people, the environment and cultural heritage.	
1.6.5	Threatened or protected species have not been displaced, and the impact on all wildlife habitats has been minimised and mitigated.	
1.6.6	Water courses/watersheds/wetlands are not altered.	
1.6.7	For landscaping, decoration and restoration, preference is given to the use of native and endemic plants obtained from sustainable sources, avoiding exotic and invasive species.	
1.6.8	As appropriate to the nature and characteristics of the operation, sites, buildings, activities and services are designed or adapted to be accessible for people with physical disabilities and other special needs.	
1.6.9	Public and accurate information is available about the existing measures, resources, infrastructure and restrictions to facilitate accessibility for people with disabilities at sites, buildings, activities and services.	

Criterion 1.7	The quality of customers and visitors experience is continuously improved	GSTC
Outcome	<i>Customer satisfaction is achieved by implementing good quality procedures, provision of relevant interpretative information about the services and destination and assessing satisfaction levels to drive continuous improvement.</i>	✓
1.7.1	Facilities receive timely maintenance, are clean and in good working order to meet service standards and enhance customer satisfaction.	
1.7.2	Cleaning and maintenance activities are carried out at appropriate times to prevent noise and/or inconveniences to clients.	
1.7.3	Service failures, deficiencies or shortcomings reported by clients (guests, passengers or visitors) and staff during day-to-day operations are formally addressed and solved.	
1.7.4	Marketing materials and communications are accurate regarding the organisation and its products and services, including its sustainability claims.	✓
1.7.5	Clients (guests, passengers or visitors) are provided with interpretative information about the natural and cultural surroundings, including its history, traditions and expressions.	✓
1.7.6	Clients (guests, passengers or visitors) are encouraged to visit local communities or sites where natural and cultural heritage is responsibly valued and protected.	
1.7.7	Clients (guests, visitors or passengers) are informed on how to respectfully behave when visiting natural protected areas, sites of cultural importance, when in the presence of local cultural expressions or interacting with the local community.	✓
1.7.8	Clients (guests, visitors or passengers) are informed of regulations concerning wildlife harvesting, consumption and trade, and the need to avoid buying illegal products/souvenirs derived from threatened species of wildlife included in the CITES and the IUCN lists.	✓

1.7.9	Clients (guests, passengers or visitors) are encouraged to minimise or prevent the use of personal substances which may be considered harmful to the environment (such as toxic sunscreens and repellents).	✓
1.7.10	A formal mechanism is implemented to assess client (guests, passengers or visitors) satisfaction, including evaluating sustainability aspects; corrective actions are taken where appropriate.	✓
1.7.11	Formal practices are implemented for the safe and hygienic handling of food and beverage services, including, when applicable, the management of kitchens.	

4.2 Principle 2: Peoples' well-being and human rights are respected

Criterion 2.1	Human rights are respected	GSTC
Outcome	Human rights are respected in all aspects of operations and activities.	
2.1.1	Fundamental human rights are respected.	
2.1.2	Human rights are respected according to international law.	✓
2.1.3	The confidentiality and anonymity of environmental and human rights defenders, union representatives, whistle-blowers, complainants and community spokespersons are respected.	
2.1.4	Tourism activities do not contribute to political, economic, social and/or environmental conflicts that put community peace and livelihoods at risk.	
2.1.5	Significant past violations of human rights affecting Indigenous People, communities or workers have been fairly remediated through adequate, legitimate and culturally appropriate mechanisms.	

Criterion 2.2	Child labour is not permitted, and employment of young workers is responsibly managed	GSTC
Outcome	Child labour is eliminated, and children are protected. Where young workers are employed, their employment follows best practices.	✓
2.2.1	Legal requirements related to the employment of young workers and child labour are complied with.	✓
2.2.2	Child labour is not used, promoted or supported in any way.	✓
2.2.3	Children under the age of 15 (or under the age for completion of compulsory education, whichever is higher) are not employed except when covered by national legislation in accordance with Article 7 of the ILO Minimum Age Convention.	✓
2.2.4	Where the young workers are employed, the following requirements are met: a) Young workers only work outside of compulsory school hours. b) Young workers do not work more than eight hours a day. c) Young workers do not work without supervision during night hours.	

Criterion 2.3	Modern slavery, forced or compulsory labour does not occur	GSTC
Outcome	Forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking do not occur, and no dependence is built, or restrictions made for workers' freedom to choose their employer.	✓
2.3.1	Legal and ILO convention requirements related to modern slavery, including forced labour are complied with.	✓
2.3.2	Modern slavery, forced labour or compulsory labour is not used, promoted or supported in any way.	
2.3.3	Withholding of salary, benefits, documents or property is not used in ways to restrict workers' freedom.	

2.3.4	Workers have the right to leave the workplace after completing their workday.	
2.3.5	Workers are free to terminate their employment provided that they give reasonable notice to their employer.	
2.3.6	Specific measures are implemented to prevent any form of commercial, sexual or other types of exploitation or harassment, particularly of children, adolescents, women, minorities and other vulnerable groups.	✓

Criterion 2.4	Workers' rights are respected	GSTC
Outcome	The rights of all workers are respected, including the International Labour Organization's (ILO) eight fundamental Conventions.	✓
2.4.1	'Freedom of Association', the 'Right to Organise' and the 'Right to Collective Bargaining' are respected in accordance with relevant ILO conventions, or legal requirements where these exceed the ILO conventions.	✓
2.4.2	Legal requirements and ILO conventions related to working hours, overtime, rest time and time off, are complied with.	✓
2.4.3	Overtime is voluntary and does not result in a work week exceeding 60 total hours, except under circumstances of shorter duration where additional labour is required.	✓
2.4.4	Workers are treated respectfully and never subject to abuse or harassment (including sexual), or verbal, physical or psychological mistreatment.	✓
2.4.5	The privacy rights of workers are respected, including, but not limited to, whenever an employer gathers private information or implements employee-monitoring practices.	✓
2.4.6	Legal requirements related to recruitment and employment of workers are complied with.	✓

2.4.7	Employment conditions of workers, including wages, bonuses, work hours, overtime, vacation and others, are documented and available to workers prior to employment.	✓
2.4.8	Responsibilities towards workers are not avoided, by hiring de facto permanent, long-time, full- time workers under seasonal or temporary contracts.	✓
2.4.9	Where migrant workers are hired, the following are ensured, in addition to the other provisions of this standard related to human and workers' rights: a) The employment of migrant workers follows legal requirements. b) Migrant workers are legally authorised to enter, stay and engage in a remunerated activity in the area/country. c) Migrant workers and their families are free to travel and leave the area/country without restrictions, except for those restrictions defined by law.	✓
2.4.10	Migrant workers are ensured equality of opportunities and no less favourable treatment than local workers.	
2.4.11	Employee satisfaction is periodically monitored, and a mechanism for them to express opinions and grievances is in place.	

Criterion 2.5	Discrimination does not occur	GSTC
Outcome	There is no discrimination related to employment or occupation.	✓
2.5.1	Legal requirements related to discrimination are complied with.	✓
2.5.2	There is no discrimination in hiring, remuneration, access to training, promotion, termination or retirement.	✓

2.5.3	The proportion of employees from the local community, including those in management positions, is monitored and tracked, including the representation of social groups at risk of been marginalised to continuously improve the diversity and inclusion efforts of the organisation.	✓
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Criterion 2.6	All workers are remunerated in a responsible manner	GSTC
Outcome	All workers, permanent and contractors, seasonal and migrant workers, are remunerated meeting or exceeding legal requirements and respecting workers' right to a decent standard of living.	✓
2.6.1	Legal requirements related to wages and other payments, such as social insurance, are complied with.	✓
2.6.2	The remuneration received for a standard work period by a worker in a particular location is sufficient to afford a decent standard of living for the worker and their family.	
2.6.3	Wages meet – and whenever possible exceed – minimum legal and industry standards.	✓
2.6.4	Payment is made in full, timely and directly to all workers to ensure they safely receive and retain their wages.	
2.6.5	Where an employer provides services for which workers pay, such as medical services, schooling, meals and other amenities, these are valued fairly and do not exceed local market prices.	
2.6.6	Workers' wages and benefits are received as contractually agreed for each pay period.	

Criterion 2.7	Facilities, operations and activities are safe	GSTC
Outcome	Facilities and activities are safe and healthy, and workers have access to and use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment, commensurate with the activities undertaken.	✓
2.7.1	Legal requirements related to the health and safety of facilities, activities, operations, transport and the workplaces are complied with.	✓
2.7.2	All equipment, vehicles, machinery, and utilities must be safe and in good working order, with all relevant safety features complete and functioning properly.	✓
2.7.3	Indoor workplaces are hygienic, with adequate lighting, temperature, ventilation, sanitation, drinking water, sanitary facilities as well as rest facilities, and, where applicable, food storage.	✓
2.7.4	Workers are competent in health and safety issues, including, where applicable, handling machinery, equipment, chemicals, and food supplies, as well as identifying and responding to potential risks and emergencies.	✓
2.7.5	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is available, appropriate, in good condition and used by all workers and external contractors in the activities conducted.	✓
2.7.6	Workers handling chemicals or any other potentially harmful substances have access to appropriate facilities for cleaning and washing.	✓
2.7.7	Expectant and nursing mothers are not engaged in activities that expose them to risks to their health and safety.	✓
2.7.8	Emergency exits, alarms, fire detection systems and fire suppression equipment are in place, properly marked, visible, and in working order at all facilities and/or in vehicles.	✓
2.7.9	Appropriate first aid equipment is accessible at all facilities, activities and/or in vehicles; as well as medical services in case of emergencies.	✓

2.7.10	Formal risk and emergency management practices are implemented to prevent and/or efficiently respond to safety threats the operation is exposed to.	
2.7.11	Instructions and safety guidance for emergency situations, and warning signs to prevent clients (guests, visitors or passengers) and staff of potential dangers and risks are in place and visible at all facilities and/or in vehicles.	✓
2.7.12	Evacuation routes are properly marked, using written and/or graphical signs at all facilities.	✓
2.7.13	Adequate insurance coverage is available to respond in case of civil liabilities caused by accidents or incidents involving clients (guests, passengers or visitors), staff, third parties, activities and vehicles.	✓

Criterion 2.8	Employer-provided housing is safe and hygienic	GSTC
Outcome	Where housing is provided by the employer to workers, it is in a safe and hygienic condition and is offered free of charge or for a fee commensurate with the pay.	✓
2.8.1	Legal requirements related to employer-provided housing are complied with.	✓
2.8.2	Housing is offered to workers if no affordable or safe accommodation is otherwise available, especially in remote locations where commuting is not a viable option or where workers are expected to stay within the premises for extended periods of time.	
2.8.3	If workers pay for employer-provided housing, the cost of housing is proportional to the pay and comparable to similar housing in the area/industry.	
2.8.4	Employer-provided housing is safe, hygienic and receives proper maintenance.	
2.8.5	Where workers, and their families, live in employer-provided housing, the employer ensures that they have access to medical, educational and social services.	

Criterion 2.9	Gender equality is maintained and protected	GSTC
Outcome	Gender equality is protected according to legal requirements and following best practices, including equal remuneration for work of equal value and sufficient maternity leave.	✓
2.9.1	Legal requirements related to gender equality at the workplace are complied with.	✓
2.9.2	Equal condition job opportunities are available to all people, irrespective of gender.	✓
2.9.3	Irrespective of gender, there is equal remuneration for work of equal value.	✓
2.9.4	Legal requirements related to maternity and paternity leave are complied with.	✓
2.9.5	Pregnant women who are permanent workers shall have at least four weeks of maternity leave, with pay or access to similar income as regular salary.	

Criterion 2.10	The rights of Indigenous Peoples are known and respected	GSTC
Outcome	The rights of Indigenous Peoples are known and respected, and interaction with them is conducted in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner.	
2.10.1	Indigenous Peoples affected or potentially affected by the activities of the organisation are known and their rights are respected.	
2.10.2	The rights of Indigenous Peoples to decide about their participation in tourism activities are respected and upheld, following the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) before including them in these activities.	
2.10.3	The impacts of activities on Indigenous Peoples are known and negative impacts are avoided.	

2.10.4	Interaction with Indigenous Peoples is carried out in a consensual, respectful and culturally appropriate manner.	
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Criterion 2.11	Communities are supported and their rights are respected	GSTC
Outcome	There is respectful, collaborative, mutually beneficial and enriching engagement with the local communities.	
2.11.1	Communities potentially affected by the activities of the organisation are identified.	
2.11.2	Legally recognised customary and community rights are identified and respected.	✓
2.11.3	Reasonable opportunities for employment, training and provision of services and goods are made available to communities within the area of operations of the organisation.	✓
2.11.4	Sites and resources within the area of operation, fundamental for satisfying the basic needs of local communities are identified and protected as appropriate.	✓
2.11.5	Sites, resources and habitats of cultural, archaeological, historical, ecological, economic and/or religious/sacred importance for the traditions and/or culture of communities affected by operations are identified and protected as appropriate.	
2.11.6	There is active participation in the planning and/or support in the implementation of local projects and/or initiatives that are beneficial for the local and/or visited communities.	✓
2.11.7	There is active participation in initiatives and partnerships seeking to improve the sustainable planning and management of the local destination.	✓
2.11.8	Operational needs are constantly evaluated and monitored to prevent any activities from jeopardising the provision of basic services to neighbouring or visited communities.	✓

2.11.9	Residents' rights to access livelihoods, natural resources, sites of historical, cultural and/or spiritual importance and/or for recreation are respected and protected as part of the planning and development of tourism activities.	✓
2.11.10	A public and openly available mechanism is in place for members of the local and/or visited communities to express their opinions/concerns/grievances about any negative impacts, including reduced access to livelihoods resulting from the organisation's activities and operations.	
2.11.11	Where appropriate and possible, opportunities for joint ventures and commercial partnerships with local entrepreneurs are considered and pursued.	✓
2.11.12	Where appropriate and possible, the organisation develops respectful, inclusive and formal business relationships with community-based tourism initiatives that promote sustainable livelihoods at the destination(s) where it operates.	✓
2.11.13	Clients (guests, passengers or visitors) are encouraged to purchase locally produced supplies and goods, buy locally made handicrafts and commercial cultural products, or employ services from local suppliers.	✓
2.11.14	Where mutually beneficial, locally owned businesses and service suppliers are given access to clients (guests, passengers or visitors) of the organisation to offer their products and services.	✓

Criterion 2.12	Culture is respected and valued	GSTC
Outcome	Properties, sites and/or traditions of historical, archaeological, cultural and/or spiritual significance are protected, valued and enhanced, always respecting the intellectual property rights of local and Indigenous communities.	
2.12.1	Cultures are respected and valued and negative impacts on the local culture are minimised.	
2.12.2	Activities for research, management, rescue, enhancement and/or protection of cultural heritage sites, traditions and/or expressions that are of archaeological, historical, cultural and/or sacred importance are supported.	✓

2.12.3	Historical and archaeological artefacts are not sold, traded or displayed, except as permitted by local and international law.	✓
2.12.4	International and/or national good practice are followed for the management and promotion of visits to Indigenous communities and culturally or historically sensitive sites to minimise adverse impacts, maximise local benefits and enhance visitor fulfilment.	✓
2.12.5	Local elements of art and cultural heritage, including vernacular architecture, are valued and incorporated in operations, services, design, decoration, furnishings, cuisine and shops.	✓

4.3 Principle 3: Nature and the environment are protected

Criterion 3.1	Forests and other ecosystems are not converted	GSTC
Outcome	Activities do not contribute to deforestation or the conversion of forests or other natural ecosystems.	
3.1.1	Primary forests and natural ecosystems are not degraded or converted to other land uses after 31 December 2020.	
3.1.2	Natural forests and ecosystems are not converted to other land uses after 31 December 2020.	
3.1.3	Where degradation or conversion of forests or other ecosystems has taken place within the previous 10 years, restoration activities are implemented to compensate for ecosystem loss.	✓

Criterion 3.2	Forests and other ecosystems are not degraded	GSTC
Outcome	Activities are conducted to avoid degradation and to ensure the resource's long-term productivity.	✓
3.2.1	Legal requirements related to management and tourism activities in forests and/or other natural ecosystems are complied with.	✓
3.2.2	Natural resources are managed to ensure long-term conservation of the forests and natural ecosystems used for tourism activities.	✓

Criterion 3.3	Ecosystems and biodiversity values are identified and protected	GSTC
Outcome	Ecosystem and biodiversity values are identified, maintained and enhanced, subject to the precautionary approach, in alignment with the HCV Networks Guidance ² .	✓
3.3.1	Legal requirements related to the conservation of biodiversity, preservation of natural sites, protection of threatened and/or endangered species and the environment are complied with.	✓
3.3.2	Ecosystem and biodiversity values within the area of operations are known, and support is provided for their protection, management and/or enhancement through engagement with relevant stakeholders, affected parties and experts.	✓
3.3.3	Ecosystem and biodiversity values within the area of operations are managed to maintain or enhance their ecological functions, services, species and structural complexity.	✓
3.3.4	Wildlife species are not harvested, consumed, displayed, sold or traded, except as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their use is sustainable, and in compliance with local and international laws.	✓

² HCV Network: [Common Guidance for the Management and Monitoring of HCV](#)

3.3.5	Where applicable, rare, endangered or protected animal and plant species are identified and their populations are protected, maintained and/or enhanced.	✓
3.3.6	The introduction of invasive species is avoided, and already present invasive species are controlled as possible.	✓
3.3.7	Legal requirements related to the harvesting, collection and trade of CITES species are complied with.	✓

Criterion 3.4	Chemical products are used cautiously with minimal negative impacts	GSTC
Outcome	The use of chemicals is minimised and any application ensures the protection of human health, as well as ensuring minimal environmental impacts.	✓
3.4.1	Legal requirements related to chemical use and storage are complied with.	✓
3.4.2	Prohibited chemicals are not used.	✓
3.4.3	Where chemicals are used, formal practices are implemented to ensure minimal adverse impacts on people, ecosystems and the environment.	✓
3.4.4	The use of chemicals is monitored and minimised.	✓
3.4.5	Chemical drift, run-off or spills are effectively avoided and controlled.	✓
3.4.6	For cleaning and housekeeping activities, preference is given to the use of biodegradable and/or environmentally friendly products.	✓
3.4.7	For personal care amenities, preference is given to the use of natural, biodegradable and/or environmentally friendly products.	✓

3.4.8	For landscaping activities, preference is given to the use of natural or organic products, minimising the use of fertilisers and agrochemicals.	✓
3.4.9	For pest control activities, preference is given to the use of biopesticides and/or other substances that pose no threat to the environment and people, minimising the use of chemical pesticides.	✓

Criterion 3.5	Waste is reduced and managed responsibly	GSTC
Outcome	The volume and negative impacts of waste from activities, including production and processing, are managed and minimised and meet legal requirements.	✓
3.5.1	Legal requirements related to waste management are complied with.	✓
3.5.2	Waste separation, storage, treatment and final disposal practices do not pose health or safety risks for people, natural ecosystems and the environment.	✓
3.5.3	Final waste disposal is done only in legally approved facilities, and there is evidence that these minimise the negative impacts for the environment and/or local population.	✓
3.5.4	Waste is not burned, except in incinerators technically designed for the specific waste type and to recover energy.	✓
3.5.5	Waste is managed to ensure reduction, recycling, reusing and safe disposal based on the toxicity of the materials.	✓
3.5.6	The organisation monitors and keeps records of the amounts of all waste generated by its operations, including, when applicable, food waste.	✓
3.5.7	Information and practical guidance are available and communicated to encourage clients (guests, passengers or visitors), staff and suppliers to actively participate in waste reduction and management efforts.	

Criterion 3.6	Pollution is minimised or prevented	GSTC
Outcome	Pollution resulting from production, processing or other activities is controlled, minimised and meet legal requirements.	✓
3.6.1	Legal requirements related to wastewater, sewage management and final disposal are complied with.	✓
3.6.2	Wastewater and sewage from operations is not discharged into the surrounding environment, including aquatic ecosystems, unless it has undergone treatment to reach a safe level.	✓
3.6.3	The use of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) is conducted according to legal requirements and minimised as far as possible.	✓
3.6.4	Operations are conducted in a way that prevents run-off related to activities involving the use of chemicals and/or pollutants in surrounding aquatic resources and other natural ecosystems.	✓
3.6.5	Release of pollutants into the air is prevented or reduced and meets all legal levels for emissions.	✓
3.6.6	Potential sources of pollution are monitored, and when identified, action is taken to minimise and, where possible, eliminate them.	✓

Criterion 3.7	Water resources are protected and used efficiently	GSTC
Outcome	Water use and sourcing complies with legal requirements, are responsible and does not adversely affect the sources and their long-term viability.	✓
3.7.1	Legal requirements related to the use of water, acquisition of water rights and the protection of surface and ground water sources are complied with.	✓

3.7.2	Practices are implemented to optimise and/or reduce water consumption in all possible areas of the operations and negative impacts to the surrounding environment.	✓
3.7.3	The organisation monitors and keeps records of its water consumption.	✓
3.7.4	Water quality is periodically analysed to ensure it's safe for human use and consumption.	
3.7.5	Where applicable, water resources are managed to ensure that water quality and balance are maintained or improved and do not restrict availability for other users.	
3.7.6	Where applicable, riparian buffer zones are protected.	
3.7.7	Information and practical guidance are available and communicated to encourage clients (guests, passengers or visitors), staff and suppliers to actively participate in water-saving efforts.	

Criterion 3.8	Soil is conserved and managed appropriately	GSTC
Outcome	Negative impacts on soils are managed and minimised.	✓
3.8.1	Where applicable, legal requirements related to soil management are complied with.	✓
3.8.2	Where applicable, water and wind erosion are reduced through practices such as ground covers, mulches, protection and re-vegetation of steep areas, terracing or filter strips to protect soils.	✓

Criterion 3.9	Animal welfare and health is secured	GSTC
Outcome	Animal health and welfare are ensured, reducing animal stress and allowing them to exercise their natural behaviours.	✓
3.9.1	There are no wild animals in captivity nor activities that involve the acquisition, captivity, display and/or breeding of wild animals unless these are for educational purposes, rescue, recovery and/or strict conservation of the species.	✓
3.9.2	Legal requirements related to the acquisition, captivity, display, breeding, handling, health and welfare of animals are complied with.	✓
3.9.3	Animals are fed to satisfy nutritional needs and good health.	✓
3.9.4	Animals have access to environments that allow them to move freely and exhibit natural behaviour.	✓
3.9.5	Animals have continuous access to sufficient, fresh, and clean water, without competition between animals.	✓
3.9.6	Measures are taken to prevent diseases, as well as pain and injuries to captive or domestic animals.	✓
3.9.7	Housing, pens and handling facilities have adequate space, ventilation, lighting, drainage and are safe, minimising the risk of diseases, injury and stress according to climatic conditions.	✓
3.9.8	Workers responsible for handling animals have the appropriate qualifications and experience in animal welfare, as well as the corresponding accreditations.	✓
3.9.9	Pack animals are in good health, outfitted with the proper equipment and managed by staff with experience and competence in caring for this type of animals.	✓
3.9.10	The organisation is aware of and complies with regulations and guidelines concerning wildlife tourism activities, including observation and interaction.	✓

3.9.11	Direct interactions with wild animals, in particular feeding, and other invasive forms are not permitted.	✓
3.9.12	Impacts from activities concerning wildlife tourism, including wildlife observation and interaction, are regularly monitored and addressed. Measures are taken to minimise any disturbance to wildlife's behaviour and/or their habitats.	✓

4.4 Principle 4: Climate impacts are reduced and mitigated

Criterion 4.1	Greenhouse gas emissions are reduced	GSTC
Outcome	Best business practices to minimise major greenhouse gas emissions are implemented, adjusted to the risks and proportionate to the scale and nature of the operation.	✓
4.1.1	Significant greenhouse gas emission sources for all scopes are identified, measured and monitored.	✓
4.1.2	Efforts are taken to avoid and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases resulting from activities and sources controlled and/or influenced by the organisation.	✓
4.1.3	Practices are implemented to reduce energy consumption in all possible areas of the operations, or to maintain it within rational levels.	✓
4.1.4	The organisation monitors and keeps records of its energy, fuels and gas consumption.	✓
4.1.5	Specific actions are taken to incorporate the use of renewable sources or alternative technologies to supply the energy needs of the operations.	✓
4.1.6	The use of climate-efficient transport options is actively promoted among clients (guests, passengers or visitors) staff and suppliers.	✓

4.1.7	Low carbon food options are available or sourced and actively promoted among clients (guests, passengers or visitors) staff and suppliers.	
4.1.8	Daily operations, tours and activities seek to minimise the use of transport whenever feasible.	✓
4.1.9	The carbon footprint of each trip and/or stay is calculated for every client (guests, passengers or visitors), offering opportunities to offset the emissions, either partially or completely.	✓
4.1.10	Efforts are taken to offset the remaining greenhouse gas emissions resulting from sources and activities controlled and/or influenced by the organisation.	✓
4.1.11	If applicable, national and/or international regulations concerning emission reduction targets for applicable climate change factors and actions are complied with.	✓
4.1.12	Information and practical guidance are available and communicated to encourage clients (guests, passengers or visitors), staff and suppliers to actively participate in reducing emissions and adopting low-carbon lifestyles.	

Criterion 4.2	Climate change adaptation efforts are implemented proportionately to the risks	GSTC
Outcome	Risks resulting from climate change that may endanger the sustainability of operations are considered and appropriate climate adaptation measures are implemented.	
4.2.1	The most relevant risks for the operation, resulting or potentially resulting from climate change, are identified.	
4.2.2	Measures for climate change adaptation are implemented for areas of high risk and proportionate to the scale of the operations and anticipated social, economic and environmental impacts.	

Criterion 4.3	Efforts are taken for GHG removal and ecosystem restoration as appropriate	GSTC
Outcome	Opportunities for GHG removal, ecosystem restoration and other related activities is considered when feasible and relevant.	
4.3.1	Best business practice to ensure GHG removals based on land-use and land management practices and carbon stocks to promote positive climate regulation over time are implemented.	
4.3.2	If implemented, ecosystems restoration efforts aim to both regain the ecological functionality of the reference ecosystem and enhance human well-being, while taking into account the changing environmental, social and economic conditions of the area.	



Preferred by Nature (formerly known as NEPCon) 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 nearly 30 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 forest, agriculture and climate impact commodities, and related sectors such as tourism and conservation.

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