



## **TO-03 Sustainable Tourism Standard for Inbound Tour Operators Rainforest Alliance Certified™**

**Reviewed Version - January 2017**

The Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism standard is recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council for being 100% aligned with the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. This recognition status means that the full compliance of this standard, will allow Rainforest Alliance certified tourism organizations to also comply with this set of global criteria that promotes responsible practices to positively influence the businesses that adopt them, as well as the destinations where their activities are carried out.

The Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism standard is divided into three fields, designed to assess the organization's performance regarding their business, sociocultural and environmental practices. These fields are in turn divided into principles and criteria, which define in each case, the desired effect of its implementation.

Each criterion has specific indicators which define precise requirements that need to be met or proven by any business interested in attaining the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism Certification.

The Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism standard indicators are divided into critical (mandatory) and ordinary. All companies applying for a Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism Certification must comply with at least 70% of ordinary indicators, as well as 100% compliance of critical indicators.

Non-compliance of any of the critical indicators, regardless of the overall result of an audit process, entails a precondition that the applicant organization must resolve before it can be eligible to receive the sustainable tourism certification from Rainforest Alliance.



### **Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism standard objectives:**

The Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism standard is structured around four main objectives:

1. That the biodiversity and ecosystems of tourist destinations are preserved through the implementation of environmental management systems by companies; these measures protect the integrity of ecosystems, the rational use of natural resources, the protection of the biodiversity and the mitigation of various negative impacts, including those derived from climate change.
2. That the social and cultural development of the communities involved in tourist activities improve; by reinforcing, the economic activities that they are involved in and as a result, their livelihoods.
3. That tourist activities are carried out fully respecting and appreciating all the local cultural expressions, while at the same time protecting and emphasizing the importance of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
4. That Rainforest Alliance Certified™ businesses position themselves in the international markets thanks to their efficiency and the quality of their sustainable products and services, because of the implementation of a business management system that embodies the principles of sustainability as the fundamental basis and philosophy.

### **Scope of the implementation of the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism standard:**

The scope of the certification audit shall be the organizations management system and the physical facilities where activities directly related to touristic services are carried out; areas and facilities located at operational units belonging to the audited organization are also included.

The effects caused by the implementation of this sustainable management system encouraged by the standard can be measured on two levels: impact on the audited organization and impact on the destination (this is especially the case for effects on the protection of biodiversity and improvement of sustainable livelihoods for the people).



### **Principles of the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism Standard:**

As already stated, the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism standard is divided in three fields: business/economic, socio-cultural and environmental.

The business field systematizes the organization's management under sustainability principles. This is achieved through 7 principles that address key topics for the efficient organization of a sustainable business:

- 1) Sustainable management planning;
- 2) Quality management;
- 3) Human resource management;
- 4) Safety management;
- 5) Communication and marketing management;
- 6) Supplier management; and
- 7) Sustainability Education.

The socio-cultural field is divided in 4 principles that address the social aspects of the employees and the community; as well as the respect and protection of cultural heritage and living culture. The principles are:

- 1) Contribution to local development;
- 2) Legal and ethical labor practices;
- 3) Respect for local cultures and people; and
- 4) Rescue and protection of historical and cultural heritage.

The environmental field addresses those aspects of business management that have an impact on the use of natural resources, the ecosystems, biodiversity and climate change. The principles are:

- 1) Climate change;
- 2) Rational use of water;
- 3) Rational use of energy;
- 4) Protection of biodiversity;
- 5) Conservation of natural areas;
- 6) Prevention of pollution; and
- 7) Solid waste management.

All the standard principles are assessed to measure the level of compliance of the audited organization; and as a result, it can be determined whether there is a formal sustainable management system in place or not.



***The Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism standard designed to guarantee and promote the sustainability of inbound tour operators all over the world, is recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), for being 100% aligned with the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria.***

***Furthermore, the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism certification program has been formally approved by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), for having demonstrated that its implementation adheres to processes and procedures that warrant transparency, impartiality and objectivity while encouraging sustainability in the tourism industry.***

***In order to be able to attain or keep the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism certification, all organizations audited with this standard must comply 100% of its critical indicators; and with at least 70% of the overall standard.***

***As well as the above mentioned, organizations that obtain the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism certification, and who also comply with the criteria in the standard that are equivalent to the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria of the GSTC, will be eligible to use simultaneously with the Rainforest Alliance Certified™ seal, the “GSTC Certified” language/logo on their certification statements.***

***Those indicators of Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism Standard that are equivalent to the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria are identified in this document with a (\*), found on the right side of the identification number of all applicable cases.***



## Business Field

### Outcome

Rainforest Alliance Certified tourism organization are positioned in international markets due to their efficiency and to the quality of their sustainable products and services. This is achieved through the implementation of a business management system which incorporates sustainability principles into 7 management programs.

### Principle E.1.

## Sustainable Management Planning

### Outcome

The organization is managed efficiently through the implementation of programs that consider the principles of sustainability (economic, socio-cultural and environmental).

### Criterion E.1.1. (Critical)

The organization has documented the key elements of its sustainable management system.

### Outcome

The sustainable management system works efficiently (maximizes positive and minimizes negative impacts).

### Indicator E.1.1.1

Vision, mission & sustainable company values are documented in writing.

### Indicator E.1.1.2 (Critical) (\*)

A written sustainability policy is documented, defining goals and objectives for each field of work on the sustainable management system.

### Evaluation Requirements

*In order to ensure the long term implementation of its sustainable management system, the organization must show that a sustainability policy customized to its reality and operational scale has been documented. This policy must establish the objectives for the sustainable management system regarding the business or economic, as well as the socio-cultural and environmental fields.*

*The objectives of the policy can be presented in a general manner and make reference only to the three fields of sustainability. Nonetheless, the proposal must prove to be linked to the creation and implementation of operational programs for each of the subjects encompassed by the principles of the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism standard.*



#### **Indicator E.1.1.3**

A written ethics code is documented and applicable to all people related to the organization, to promote the principles of sustainable development.

#### **Criterion E.1.2.**

**The organization informs clients, staff, and third parties about the content and scope of the key elements of its sustainable management system.**

#### **Outcome**

**The outcomes of sustainable management programs in place are optimized through the participation and commitment of clients, staff, and third parties.**

#### **Indicator E.1.2.1**

Vision, mission, and company values are communicated to clients, employees, and third parties to encourage their implementation.

#### **Indicator E.1.2.2**

The sustainability policy is communicated to clients, employees, and third parties to encourage its implementation.

#### **Indicator E.1.2.3 (\*)**

Staff is trained on how to apply the sustainability policy to their daily work tasks.



**Principle E.2.**

**Quality Management**

**Outcome**

**The quality of products and services meets the needs of clients and the sustainability market.**

**Criterion E.2.1.**

**The organization has documented its quality assurance program.**

**Outcome**

**The quality assurance program works efficiently.**

**Indicator E.2.1.1**

Quality and service standards for the various activities performed within the organization are documented in writing.

**Indicator E.2.1.2**

A formal procedure for taking reservations and following them up is documented in writing.

**Indicator E.2.1.3**

The reservations procedure includes the collection of information on client expectations and other needs, in order to improve their services and the overall experience.

**Indicator E.2.1.4**

A preventive maintenance plan is documented in writing, which includes facilities, equipment, and/or vehicles.



**Criterion E.2.2.**

**The organization periodically monitors the results of its operational and maintenance activities, defined within its quality assurance program.**

**Outcome**

**Operational performance and maintenance activities are continuously tracked and improved as a result of an effective periodical monitoring system.**

**Indicator E.2.2.1**

Records are kept to demonstrate the implementation of the activities on the preventive maintenance plan.

**Indicator E.2.2.2**

Records are kept on the faults and/or deficiencies reported on the daily operations.

**Indicator E.2.2.3**

Records are kept to report all corrective actions taken as follow up to the faults and/or deficiencies identified on the daily operations.

**Indicator E.2.2.4**

Facilities, furniture, equipment, and/or vehicles demonstrate appropriate maintenance.

**Indicator E.2.2.5**

Facilities, furniture, equipment, and/or vehicles are kept clean and in order.

**Indicator E.2.2.6**

Cleaning and maintenance activities are carried out based on a program that avoids setbacks or inconveniences to the operation.





**Criterion E.2.3.**

**The organization implements mechanisms to measure client satisfaction.**

**Outcome**

**Client satisfaction is reviewed periodically and incorporated into the continuous service improvement.**

**Indicator E.2.3.1 (\*)**

A formal mechanism is implemented to measure client satisfaction and to collect suggestions and/or opinions.

**Evaluation Requirements**

*The mechanism implemented to measure client satisfaction, allows the organization to gather direct feedback about its public environmental and social actions implemented in response to its sustainability policy.*

**Indicator E.2.3.2 (\*)**

Client feedback and opinions are reviewed and, when needed, lead to corrective actions.

**Criterion E.2.4.**

**The organization designs and operates its services by ensuring compliance with commonly accepted quality standards.**

**Outcome**

**The organization's quality standards meet and satisfy market standards.**

**Indicator E.2.4.2**

All staff wear a uniform and a nametag to make it easier to identify them.

**Indicator E.2.4.3**

A formal passenger registration process is implemented.

**Indicator E.2.4.4**

Every passenger has access to potable (drinking) water during tours (itineraries) or visits.



**Indicator E.2.4.8**

Food options for people with special dietary requirements are available upon request.

**Indicator E.2.4.10**

Organization has documented the interpretive texts to conduct the tours and/or itineraries that it promotes.

**Indicator E.2.4.11**

At the beginning of every tour, organization communicates to all passengers/visitors the code of conduct and safety measures that are expected/required during visits and tours.

**Indicator E.2.4.12**

Organization does not allow that one tour guide leads simultaneously the same tour in more than one language.

**Indicator E.2.4.13**

The maximum number of passengers led by one tour guide does not exceed 25 people per tour.

**Indicator E.2.4.14 (\*)**

All tour guides hired by the organization have a valid license and all certifications required to perform the different specialized activities they lead.

**Indicator E.2.4.15 (\*)**

All drivers hired by the organization have a valid driving license and in legal accordance to the class of vehicle they drive.

**Indicator E.2.4.16 (\*)**

All boat crew hired by the organization have a valid certification and/or license to operate the ships or boats they lead.



## Principle E.3.

# Human Resource Management

### Outcome

The organization's productivity and quality of products and services are maximized through the positive staff performance.

### Criterion E.3.1.

The organization has documented the key elements of its human resource management program.

### Outcome

The human resource management program is organized and efficiently implemented, enhancing equity and avoiding discriminatory practices.

### Indicator E.3.1.1 (\*)

Job descriptions for all positions are documented in writing and avoid potentially discriminatory job requirements.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Job requirements are considered to be potentially discriminatory when on a job description the specified conditions of eligibility refer to gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation, among others.*

### Indicator E.3.1.2 (\*)

A formal procedure for staff recruitment is documented in writing and implemented avoiding potentially discriminatory practices.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Recruitment practices are considered to be potentially discriminatory when applicants are rejected or selected for reasons based on gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation among others.*

### Indicator E.3.1.3 (\*)

A formal procedure for new staff orientations is documented and implemented.

### Indicator E.3.1.4

Records of employment are kept and updated in writing for each employee.



#### Criterion E.3.2.

The organization has a staff-training program that includes activities to improve technical, operational, and sustainability skills.

#### Outcome

Productivity and quality of products and services are maximized through the improvement of staff skills.

#### Indicator E.3.2.1 (\*)

Staff training needs are assessed and a formal training plan is developed to address them.

#### Indicator E.3.2.2 (\*)

Staff is trained to improve job skills.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*There is evidence that staff training activities are carried out (ideally based on the formal plan referred to in indicator E.3.2.1.) in order to improve service, environmental, social, hygiene, and safety technical skills and the appropriate use of emergency equipment among others.*

#### Indicator E.3.2.3

The results of the formal training program are evaluated and actions are taken to continuously improve its contents.

#### Criterion E.3.3.

The organization implements a formal system for evaluating staff performance.

#### Outcome

Staff performance is periodically reviewed and measures are taken for improvement.

#### Indicator E.3.3.1

A formal process is implemented for periodical staff performance evaluations.

#### Indicator E.3.3.2

A formal incentive program is implemented to recognize departments and/or individuals who demonstrate the best performance.



## Principle E.4.

# Safety Management

### Outcome

Physical integrity of the people involved in the organization's management of services is safeguarded.

### Criterion E.4.1. (Critical)

The organization maintains a safety program that is appropriate for its physical and operational environment.

### Outcome

The risks, accidents and incidents are minimized through the implementation of an efficient safety program.

### Indicator E.4.1.1 (Critical)

A formal risk assessment identifying possible risks that the operation is exposed to, is documented in writing.

### Evaluation Requirements

*The organization must have a formal risk assessment documented in writing, wherein it identifies and categorizes all the possible natural and anthropogenic risks to which their operations and all parties involved are exposed to.*

*The formal risk assessment must be drawn up based on the characteristics and conditions of the activities that the organization carries out, as well as those of its facilities. The design and all related strategies to the safety program will depend on the content of this assessment, therefore it is a required document in order to comply with many indicators on this principle.*

### Indicator E.4.1.2 (Critical)

The risk assessment covers all factors that could affect the safety of clients, employees, third parties and the facilities.

### Evaluation Requirements

*The organization must prove that its formal risk assessment takes into account, in a clear and accurate manner, all aspects that might affect the physical integrity of its clients, employees, and third parties involved in the supply of services and operations, as well as the facilities.*

*Although there are variations in each possible case, the non-compliance or partial compliance of indicator E.4.1.1 will affect the score given to this indicator. Likewise, the non-compliance or partial compliance of the requirements of this indicator will affect the score given to indicator E.4.1.3.*



#### **Indicator E.4.1.3 (Critical)**

Emergency and contingency plans to respond to the situations identified and prioritized by the formal risk assessment are documented.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Based on the formal risk assessment referred to in indicator E.4.1.1, and taking into account what is also mentioned in indicator E.4.1.2, the organization must show that its emergency and contingency plans have been documented.*

*Any non-compliance or partial compliance of indicators E.4.1.1 and E.4.1.2 will affect the score given to this indicator. Likewise, in cases where the organization has documented emergency and contingency plans that are not based on the formal risk assessment referred to in indicator E.4.1.1, these will not be adequate in order to fully comply with this indicator.*

#### **Indicator E.4.1.4 (Critical)**

The formal risk assessment and the emergency plans are periodically reviewed, and updated when needed.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The organization must prove that the documentation for the formal risk assessment, as well as the emergency and contingency plans are reviewed, and when necessary, are updated at least once every 18 months.*

#### **Criterion E.4.2.**

**The organization has the equipment, supplies, devices & legal support necessary to implement its safety program.**

#### **Outcome**

**Risks, accidents, and incidents are minimized through the implementation of an efficient safety program.**

#### **Indicator E.4.2.1**

First aid kit(s), containing the appropriate amounts and types of supplies are available for emergencies on every trip, tour or itinerary.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Available first aid kit(s) must be properly identified, found in accessible areas and ideally must be mobile or portable. They must contain the appropriate supplies for possible emergencies and must avoid medications wherever possible.*



#### **Indicator E.4.2.2**

Fire extinguishers are readily available at facilities and/or in vehicles.

#### ***Evaluation Requirements***

*Available fire extinguishers must be properly identified, found in visible and accessible areas, and must be in optimum working conditions.*

#### **Indicator E.4.2.3**

Fire extinguishers contain the proper agent to control the type of fire most likely to occur at their specific location.

#### ***Evaluation Requirements***

*The type of agent in the available fire extinguishers and the location of these, must comply with the requirements of the formal risk assessment and the emergency and contingency plans. Any non-compliance or partial compliance of indicators E.4.1.1 and E.4.1.3 could affect the score or full compliance of this indicator.*

#### **Indicator E.4.2.4**

Appropriate communication devices are available to respond to an emergency.

#### **Indicator E.4.2.5**

Adequate insurance coverage is in place to cover potential liabilities caused by damages to clients, staff, facilities, and vehicles.

#### **Indicator E.4.2.6**

All vehicles used by the organization are equipped with seat belts for each seat.

#### **Indicator E.4.2.7**

All boats or vessels used by the organization have a visible sign that states the maximum passenger capacity.

#### **Indicator E.4.2.8**

All boats and/or vessels used by the organization have readily available life jackets for their maximum passenger capacity.

#### **Indicator E.4.2.9**

Pack animals used by the organization are in good health, outfitted with proper equipment, and covered under the organization liability insurance.



#### Indicator E.4.2.10

The organization supports local security programs for tourists, implemented by government agencies, community based organizations, and/or business groups.

#### Criterion E.4.3.

The organization informs clients, staff, and other parties about its risk management and emergency plans.

#### Outcome

The implementation of the safety program is maximized through the participation of staff, clients, and third parties.

#### Indicator E.4.3.1 (\*)

Staff is trained on how to implement the emergency and contingency plans.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*The emergency and contingency plans referred to in this indicator are the same as required in indicator E.4.1.3. Therefore, any non-compliance or partial compliance of indicators E.4.1.1 and E.4.1.3, could affect the score and/or full compliance of this indicator.*

#### Indicator E.4.3.2

Drills are implemented for those emergency cases highlighted as more probable, and records of these activities are kept.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*All drills planned and carried out by the organization must meet the requirements of the formal risk assessment and the emergency and contingency plans. Any non-compliance or partial compliance of indicators E.4.1.1 and E. 4.1.3, could affect the score and/or full compliance of this indicator.*

#### Indicator E.4.3.3

Evacuation routes are indicated, using written and/or graphical signs, at all facilities.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*Evacuation routes, as well as the corresponding signs must meet the requirements of what is indicated in the emergency and contingency plans. Any non-compliance or partial compliance of indicators E.4.1.1 and E. 4.1.3, could affect the score and/or full compliance of this indicator.*





**Indicator E.4.3.4**

Safety instructions to follow in case of an emergency are displayed in all operating facilities and vehicles.

**Indicator E.4.3.5**

Emergency exits are free of obstacles, properly marked and visible in the dark.

**Criterion E.4.5.**

**The organization implements specific actions for the safe and hygienic handling of food and beverages.**

**Outcome**

**The health of clients and employees is protected by ensuring hygiene management of food and beverages.**

**Indicator E.4.5.1**

People who prepare food follow safety measures when handling hazardous equipment or supplies.

**Indicator E.4.5.2**

Kitchen staff uses the appropriate clothing to perform their duties.

**Indicator E.4.5.3**

All water and ice used for food preparation and drinks is potable.

**Indicator E.4.5.4**

All fruits and vegetables that are used are properly disinfected.

**Indicator E.4.5.5**

Formal procedures are implemented to properly store all food supplies based on their physical characteristics.

**Indicator E.4.5.6**

Daily monitoring is performed to assess the physical characteristics of perishable food.



Principle E.5.

## Communication and Marketing Management

### Outcome

The organization's products and services effectively reach the attention of the sustainable market.

### Criterion E.5.1.

The organization implements communication mechanisms to market its brand and the sustainable features and benefits of its services.

### Outcome

The organization is effectively positioned in the sustainable market through truthful and accurate communications.

### Indicator E.5.1.1

A communication and marketing plan that outlines the basic strategy for promoting the organization's sustainable profile is documented in writing.

### Indicator E.5.1.2

Marketing channels and/or materials are available to communicate and promote the sustainable features of the service.

### Indicator E.5.1.3 (\*)

Clients are informed in a clear and accurate manner about the sustainable features of the services.

### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Marketing materials must provide clear and accurate information about the organization and its products/services, including features of its sustainable business management. They must not raise false expectations as to what the organization can offer.*

### Indicator E.5.1.4

All marketing and communication materials are available in at least two languages.

### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Marketing and communication materials, in which the organization describes its services and sustainable profile, are required to be available in the language of the host country and in at least one more language of the organization's choice.*



#### Indicator E.5.1.5 (\*)

Recognition of the sustainable business management performance is utilized as a tool for marketing and communication.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Rainforest Alliance certified organizations are required to present documentation of approval to the auditor in order to endorse any of the uses of the Rainforest Alliance Certified seal in all promotional and informative materials.*

#### Criterion E.5.2.

**The organization ensures any resellers to promote its services in a truthful manner, communicating the sustainable features and benefits of the services.**

#### Outcome

**The entire reselling chain guarantees the accuracy of the information provided to the traveller.**

#### Indicator E.5.2.1 (\*)

Special marketing materials are available to communicate and promote the sustainable features of the services through resellers and promotional events.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Must be available in at least two languages; language of the host country and another of the organization's choice. Designed in order to facilitate information and the sale of organization services through resellers. (Preferably available in digital form).*

#### Indicator E.5.2.2 (\*)

The marketing materials used by resellers or at promotional events reflect clear and accurate information about the sustainable features of the services.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Marketing materials must reflect clear and accurate information about the organization and products/services it offers, including aspects of its sustainable business management. They must not raise false expectations as to what the organization can offer.*



**Criterion E.5.3.**

**The organization implements mechanisms to achieve client loyalty.**

**Outcome**

**Clients remain loyal to the organization by continuing to purchase products and services.**

**Indicator E.5.3.1**

Mechanisms are implemented to categorize the client 'profiles.

**Indicator E.5.3.2**

Specific actions are implemented to promote client loyalty.



Principle E.7.

## Supplier Management

### Outcome

Supply chains are defined taking into account sustainability, quality and safety standards among selected providers.

### Criterion E.7.1. (Critical)

The organization gives preference to suppliers that apply sustainable practices.

### Outcome

The organization's supply chain is enhanced because of preferring suppliers that apply sustainable practices.

### Indicator E.7.1.1 (Critical) (\*)

A purchasing policy that outlines the preference for sustainable suppliers is documented in writing.

### Evaluation Requirements

*The general purpose of the purchasing policy is to ensure the implementation of sustainable consumption practices. Its availability and implementation favors the compliance of the rest of the indicators of this principle as well as others in the standard.*

### Indicator E.7.1.2 (\*)

The purchasing policy sets out the parameters to assess and evaluate the sustainable characteristics of contractors, supplies and equipment.

### Evaluation Requirements

*The organization's purchasing policy must establish specific and formal procedures and criteria to properly evaluate and select contractors, equipment, devices and supplies and favor the hiring and/or preferential use of those that offer the best characteristics in order to reinforce its sustainable management system.*

### Indicator E.7.1.3

Records are kept to demonstrate the formal monitoring of the sustainable performance of the regular suppliers.

### Evaluation Requirements

*In all possible cases, the organization is expected to be able to demonstrate evidence of a follow up to the observations and recommendations resulting from the monitoring of regular suppliers, as well as any improvements achieved.*



#### **Indicator E.7.1.4 (\*)**

Within feasible measures, the organization demonstrates the procurement of certified supplies of sustainable origin.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The action referred to in this indicator must be demonstrated by way of concrete examples of its implementation. However, the basis of this, is directly linked to the availability of a sustainable purchasing policy; therefore, the non-compliance or partial compliance of critical indicator E.7.1.1, will affect the full compliance of this indicator.*

#### **Criterion E.7.2.**

**The organization gives preference to suppliers that comply with quality and safety practices and standards.**

#### **Outcome**

**The quality and safety of goods and services used is enhanced because of preference given to suppliers that comply with these practices and standards.**

#### **Indicator E.7.2.1 (\*)**

Specific actions are taken to give preference to suppliers who meet quality standards.

#### **Indicator E.7.2.2 (\*)**

Specific actions are taken to give preference to suppliers who meet safety standards.

#### **Indicator E.7.2.3 (\*)**

Specific actions are taken to give preference to suppliers who meet food safety standards.



## Principle E.8.

# Sustainability Education

### Outcome

People adopt consumption and living behaviors that are based on sustainable principles.

### Criterion E.8.1. (Critical)

The organization has documented its sustainability educational program.

### Outcome

The organization promotes the adoption of sustainable lifestyles and behaviors through its educational activities for clients, employees and community members.

### Indicator E.8.1.1 (Critical) (\*)

A sustainability education program is documented in writing, defining activities and goals targeted at clients, staff, and the larger community.

### Evaluation Requirements

*In order to encourage the adoption of sustainable practices that positively transform the behavior of all persons the organization interacts with, it is expected that a formal program is documented and implemented in order to educate clients, staff and the larger community concerning the most relevant issues of sustainable development.*

*The program must clearly define its target audiences, as well as the activities it will carry out with each of them. Likewise, it must have a documented schedule or program of activities with formal records that show its implementation.*

*The Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism standard does not interpret the terms education and training as synonyms. The term education is defined as a series of actions oriented towards inducing and developing intellectual, moral and affective sensibility in persons with respect to nature, cultural diversity and co-habitation rules.*

*While training is defined as a teaching/learning process through, which staff abilities and skills are developed in order to improve their performance during the accomplishment of certain assignments or tasks related to a job function.*



#### **Indicator E.8.1.2**

All didactic and support materials are available to implement the actions included in the sustainability education program.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*All didactic or support materials referred to in this indicator are those created or available for the implementation of any activities considered in the sustainability education program referred to in critical indicator E.8.1.1.*

*Therefore, the non-compliance or partial compliance or critical indicator E.8.1.1, will directly affect the full compliance of this indicator and /or will lead to recommendations from the auditor which must be addressed in order to ensure the proper conformance of its evaluation requirements.*

#### **Criterion E.8.2.**

**The organization implements specific actions to educate clients, employees, and community members on sustainable practices and behaviors.**

#### **Outcome**

**Community members adopt consumption and living behaviors based on sustainable principles.**

#### **Indicator E.8.2.1 (\*)**

The implementation of activities outlined in the sustainability education program is demonstrated.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The activities mentioned in this indicator will be the ones contemplated in the sustainability education program referred to in critical indicator E.8.1.1. Consequently, the non-compliance or partial compliance of this critical indicator, will affect full compliance or the score of this indicator.*

#### **Indicator E.8.2.2 (\*)**

Client participation in projects that encourage and/or support sustainability in favor of the destination and/or community is promoted.

#### **Indicator E.8.2.3**

Records are kept on the participation in the activities that are part of the sustainability education program.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The records referred to in this indicator are those related to the activities considered in the sustainability education program. Therefore, the non-compliance or partial compliance of critical indicator E.8.1.1 or indicator E.8.2.1, will determine full compliance or the score of this indicator.*





## **Socio-cultural Field**

### **Outcome**

*Social and cultural development of the communities involved with sustainable tourism is optimized; this is achieved by improving the sustainable livelihoods of people, respecting and appreciating local cultures and conserving the tangible and intangible cultural heritage.*

### **Principle SC.1.**

## **Contribution to Local Development**

### **Outcome**

**Local economy and social well-being are improved through the organization active participation.**

### **Criterion SC.1.1.**

**The organization has operating practices that contribute to promote local economic development.**

### **Outcome**

**The organization's operating practices actively contribute to the improvement and reinforcement of the local economy.**

### **Indicator SC.1.1.1 (\*)**

Local residents are given priority when hiring, avoiding discriminatory practices.

### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The job opportunities offered by the organization are fair, avoiding any type of discriminatory practices. Practices considered potentially discriminatory during the recruitment or hiring process are those where applicants are rejected or selected for reasons based on gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation among others.*

### **Indicator SC.1.1.2 (\*)**

Favors the hiring of local residents for management positions, avoiding discriminatory practices.

### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The job opportunities offered by the organization for management positions are fair, avoiding discriminatory practices. Practices considered discriminatory are those where applicants are rejected or selected for reasons based on gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation among others.*



#### Indicator SC.1.1.3 (\*)

Specific actions are taken to give preference to engaging with local suppliers of goods and services.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The actions referred to in this indicator must be proven by way of concrete examples of its implementation. However, the basis of these are directly linked to the existence of a sustainable purchasing policy; therefore, the non-compliance or partial compliance of critical indicator E.7.1.1, will affect the full compliance and/or score of this indicator.*

#### Indicator SC.1.1.4 (\*)

Specific actions are taken to give preference to engaging with community owned tourism businesses.

#### Indicator SC.1.1.5 (\*)

Clients are encouraged to purchase local goods and services.

#### Indicator SC.1.1.6 (\*)

The purchase of locally made handicrafts and cultural products is promoted to clients.

#### Criterion SC.1.2.

**The organization supports activities that benefit and promote social development of its community.**

#### Outcome

**The socio-cultural development of the community is improved through the organization's operating practices.**

#### Indicator SC.1.2.1 (\*)

The organization actively supports the implementation of social activities that are beneficial for its community.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Ideally, the actions mentioned in this indicator must correspond to a community impact program which has been developed with the consensus of the beneficiaries. It is also admissible for it to respond to specific objectives defined in the organizations sustainability policy (critical indicator E.1.1.2).*

*In either case, involvement in the activities referred to in the indicator must be proven through formal action with clear documentation of the level of participation.*



#### **Indicator SC.1.2.2 (\*)**

In-kind or cash contributions are made for the execution of projects that are beneficial for the community.

#### ***Evaluation Requirements***

*Ideally, the contributions referred to in this indicator must correspond to a community impact program which has been developed with the consensus of the beneficiaries. It will also be admissible if it responds to specific objectives defined in the organizations sustainability policy (critical indicator E.1.1.2).*

*In either case, any contributions made by the organization, of any kind, must be established through precise records and as a formal and constant action.*

#### **Indicator SC.1.2.3**

The organization promotes the participation of its employees in community activities for social and cultural benefit.



## Principle SC.2.

# Legal and Ethical Labor Practices

### Outcome

The well-being of employees is improved through labor practices that comply with legal requirements and abide by ethical principles.

### Criterion SC.2.1. (Critical)

The organization implements labor practices that comply with the applicable regional, national, and international work legislation.

### Outcome

Employee rights and labor conditions are protected and in compliance with all applicable regional, national, and international work legislation.

### Indicator SC.2.1.1 (Critical) (\*)

Individual employment contracts are signed to formalize the employment relationship with its workers.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The organization must demonstrate that it has signed formal employment contracts with all its employees, making sure that these fulfill all legal requirements established in the current legislation that applies, and showing that each employee has received a signed copy of his employment contract.*

### Indicator SC.2.1.2 (Critical) (\*)

Legal records are kept to demonstrate timely payment of salaries and wages.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*In order to demonstrate compliance with this critical indicator, the organization must provide relevant documentation as proof of the timely payment of salaries and wages to all its employees. The audit team could request to examine the payrolls as far back as 12 months previous to the date the audit is carried out.*



**Indicator SC.2.1.3 (Critical) (\*)**

Records are kept to demonstrate timely payment of the corresponding contributions to the national social security system.

**Evaluation Requirements**

*In order to prove compliance with this critical indicator, the organization must provide receipts as proof of timely payments of the corresponding contributions to the national social security system. The audit team may request to examine receipts of payments of up to 12 months previous to the date of the audit.*

**Indicator SC.2.1.4 (Critical) (\*)**

The organization complies with the obligation of paying the legally established minimum wage.

**Indicator SC.2.1.5 (Critical) (\*)**

The organization provides all legally stipulated employment benefits in addition to the salary.

**Evaluation Requirements**

*The organization demonstrates that its employees are compensated for any overtime worked; and that their working day does not exceed the maximum hours stipulated by the International Labour Organization. Furthermore, there is evidence that all their employee's benefit from annual paid leave.*

*As well as the above, the organization must show that it complies with any other legally stipulated employment benefits established in the national or regional legislation that applies, in addition to the salary.*

**Indicator SC.2.1.6 (Critical) (\*)**

Internal employment policies are documented in writing and well known by all employees.



**Criterion SC.2.2. (Critical)**

The organization ensures equal working conditions for all employees and restricts child labor.

**Outcome**

Job quality is improved by providing fair working conditions and restricting child labor.

**Indicator SC.2.2.1 (Critical) (\*)**

Labor rights of pregnant, post-partum, and breastfeeding women are respected.

**Evaluation Requirements**

*The organization proves to have a formal policy in place to ensure the rights of pregnant, post-partum and breastfeeding employees. This policy is known by the employees and is in adherence to all applicable legal requirements.*

**Indicator SC.2.2.2 (Critical) (\*)**

Child labor is restricted in all activities related to the organization's operation (under 14 years of age).

**Evaluation Requirements**

*The organization demonstrates it has formal practices for any direct and indirect recruitment through its suppliers, wherein child labor is restricted, and these are in adherence to what is established in conventions 138 and 182 of the International Labour Organization.*

**Indicator SC.2.2.3 (Critical)**

The recruitment or hiring of foreigners complies with all applicable legal requirements.

**Indicator SC.2.2.4 (Critical) (\*)**

Specific measures are taken to ensure ethnic and gender equity amongst all employees.

**Evaluation Requirements**

*The organization shows it has formal policies as well as specific practices in place to prevent, and when necessary, to resolve objectively, any discriminatory behavior among its employees.*



**Criterion SC.2.3. (Critical)**

The organization ensures that working conditions protect the physical and emotional well-being of its employees.

**Outcome**

Job quality is improved by protecting the physical and emotional wellbeing of employees.

**Indicator SC.2.3.1 (Critical) (\*)**

Areas designated for staff are well maintained and provide a healthy and safe environment.

**Indicator SC.2.3.2 (Critical) (\*)**

Staff wears appropriate equipment that is necessary to protect their physical integrity while performing their duties.



Principle SC.3.

## Respect for Local Cultures and People

### Outcome

Local people maintain and value their traditional lifestyles and socio-cultural manifestations.

### Criterion SC.3.1. (Critical)

The organization ensures customs, traditions, and socio-cultural manifestations of its community are respected.

### Outcome

Local people maintain and value their customs, traditions, and socio-cultural manifestations.

### Indicator SC.3.1.1 (Critical) (\*)

The organization informs its passengers on how to properly behave when visiting sites of cultural importance or interact in public and private spaces of local life.

### Evaluation Requirements

*The organization offers information to its passengers on the codes of conduct or proper behavior recommended when interacting in public and private spaces of local life and/or when they visit sites of historical and/or cultural importance.*

*Ideally, this should be demonstrated through the existence and general availability of a code of conduct documented to this end. However, it can also be considered as valid if implemented through activities resulting from the sustainability education program referred to in critical indicator E.8.1.1.*

### Indicator SC.3.1.2 (\*)

A documented code of conduct for activities at indigenous and/or local communities has been developed and implemented with the collaboration and consent of the affected communities.





### Indicator SC.3.1.3 (Critical) (\*)

The organization implements specific measures to prevent socially harmful conducts within the business operation.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*In order to fully comply with this critical indicator, the organization must be able to demonstrate the following:*

- a. It has documented its policy (ies) relevant to these issues..*
- b. It has documented the procedures in order to make their relevant policy (ies) operational.*
- c. Employees are trained on the policies and procedures mentioned previously.*
- d. Employees show that they understand the scope of these policies and the related procedures.*
- e. That the policy (ies) are publicly available to be reviewed unrestricted by anyone interested (employees, clients, passengers or third parties).*

*It is generally understood that situations of social harm are those that undermine or infringe upon the integrity of persons or the local community, among these; discrimination in any form, misogyny, exploitation, and any activities related to human trafficking, or consumption of illicit drugs, among others.*

### Indicator SC.3.1.4 (Critical) (\*)

The organization implements specific measures to prevent commercial, sexual or any other form of exploitation of children and adolescents.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*In order to fully comply with this critical indicator, the organization must be able to demonstrate the following:*

- a. To have documented its policy relevant to this issue; or to have adhered to any of the global codes that apply (WTO, UNICEF or ECPAT).*
- b. To have documented the procedures in order to make the policy operational; or to have adhered to the procedures of any of the global codes that apply (WTO, UNICEF or ECPAT).*
- c. Employees are trained on the policies and procedures defined and/or embraced.*
- d. Employees show that they understand the scope of this policy or code, and the related procedures.*
- e. That its policy, or declaration of commitment, is publicly available to employees, clients, passengers and third parties.*

*Absence of any of the above mentioned elements will prevent the organization from complying with the present indicator until the oversight found has been amended.*



**Indicator SC.3.1.5**

The organization respects its employee's right to speak their languages and wear their traditional ethnic or regional attire.

**Indicator SC.3.1.6 (Critical)**

Local residents are not denied the right to access historical, cultural and/or spiritual sites of importance to their people.

**Indicator SC.3.1.7 (Critical) (\*)**

Activities of the operation do not jeopardize the provision of basic services to neighboring communities.

***Evaluation Requirements***

*The organization demonstrates that its activities do not affect the livelihoods, for work and subsistence, of the local people, respecting whenever it applies, the unrestricted use of local resources, rights of way and/or access, access to housing etc.*

**Indicator SC.3.1.8**

The organization assesses the satisfaction level and evaluates complaints from the local community, regarding the activities promoted to its benefit.



#### Principle SC.4.

## Rescue and Protection of Historical and Cultural Heritage

### Outcome

Tangible and intangible historical and cultural heritage is valued and protected to ensure its preservation.

### Criterion SC.4.1.

The organization ensures respect and protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

### Outcome

Local stakeholders preserve and protect their tangible and intangible historical and cultural heritage.

### Indicator SC.4.1.1

The organization provides information to its passengers about the history, culture and traditions of the region.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Information provided must be available in at least two languages, the language of the host country and any other of the organization's choice. Likewise, it should be related and be relevant to the region or place where the organization is located, or where its operations take place.*

### Indicator SC.4.1.2 (\*)

The organization has the consent of local and/or Indigenous communities for their inclusion in tourism activities.

### Indicator SC.4.1.3 (\*)

The organization encourages passengers to visit local communities or historical sites and/or to participate in traditional activities of the region.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Apart from the encouragement mentioned in this indicator, the organization also shares with passengers codes of conduct that must be observed when visiting sites of historical importance, of cultural heritage, and/or when interacting in cultural activities of the region and/or organization's location.*

*Ideally, this action could be demonstrated through the existence and public availability of a code of conduct especially documented to this end, as is mentioned in critical indicator SC.3.1.1.*



#### **Indicator SC.4.1.4 (\*)**

The organization formally supports research, management and/or protection activities at a cultural heritage site of archaeological, historical and/or sacred importance.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Ideally, these actions must correspond to specific objectives defined in the organization's sustainability policy (Critical indicator E.1.1.2). However, even when contributions made are not linked to the sustainability policy, these must consist of clear records and a formal and constant action, regardless of the kind of contribution made.*

#### **Indicator SC.4.1.5 (\*)**

The organization does not participate in activities that imply or promote illegal trade, trafficking, and/or exploitation of protected cultural assets; it has the proper permits in place for exhibitions.

#### **Criterion SC.4.2.**

**The organization includes representative elements of the local culture as part of the design of its products and services.**

#### **Outcome**

**Local culture is preserved by incorporating its representative elements in the design of the organization's products and services.**

#### **Indicator SC.4.2.1 (\*)**

The organization incorporates elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage in its operations, design and decoration, while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.

#### **Indicator SC.4.2.2 (\*)**

Specific measures are taken to ensure that facilities or buildings do not cause alterations to historical, archaeological, and/or sacred heritage sites.



## Environmental Field

### Outcome

*The biodiversity and ecosystems of tourism destinations are preserved through to the implementation of environmental management measures at the organization; such measures protect the integrity of the ecosystems, favor the rational use of the resources, protect the biodiversity, mitigate the negative impacts from the effects of climate change, and promote the adaptation of the destinations from such phenomenon.*

### Principle A.1.

## Climate Change

### Outcome

**The organization's negative impact on climate is minimized; adaptation is fostered in the operation, community, and destination.**

### Criterion A.1.1.

**The organization takes action to promote the adaption of its operations and destination to climate change.**

### Outcome

**The vulnerability of the organization and the destination to extreme climatic events is minimized.**

### Indicator A.1.1.1 (\*)

**The organization informs its clients, staff, and community members about the climate change phenomena.**

### **Evaluation Requirements**

*It is expected that all information presented by the organization educates the audiences about the climate change phenomena. That it explains its impacts and offers recommendations in order to adapt to its effects as well as ways to reduce and/or compensate for these (e.g.: through the use of alternative means of transport, participating in reforestation activities, rational use of energy, etc.).*

*Ideally, this action should be implemented through activities derived from the sustainability education program mentioned in critical indicator E.8.1.1.*

### Indicator A.1.1.2

**The organization participates in initiatives that promote the adaption of the destination and its operations to the effects of climate change.**



#### Criterion A.1.2.

The organization mitigates the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated from its operations.

#### Outcome

The negative effects on climate resulting from the organization's operation are minimized through reduction and/or compensation of its GHG emissions.

#### Indicator A.1.2.1 (\*)

Records are kept to demonstrate that GHG emissions caused by the organization's operations are measured.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*GHG emissions caused by the organization's operation are measured (to the extent possible) and formal records are kept; emissions from direct sources (e.g.: operations, equipment, activities), and from indirect sources (e.g.: purchases, transportation of clients).*

*Ideally, the carbon footprint (GHG emissions minus compensations) is monitored as part of the organization's GHG emissions estimation, with definite plans and actions to be taken in order to avoid an increase each year.*

#### Indicator A.1.2.2 (\*)

Specific actions are taken to reduce and/or compensate the GHG emissions caused by the organization's operation.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*Based on its records of GHG emission measurements, the organization shows it plans and takes formal action to reduce or eliminate emission sources, as well as actions to compensate for these when elimination is not an option.*

*The use of any refrigerant classified as an ozone depleting substance, will only be acceptable in cases where the organization has a formal plan in place for its substitution or complete elimination within a period of no more than 5 years; and when it demonstrates in a quantifiable manner that its use does not exceed 30% of operational requirements.*



Principle A.2.

## Rational Use of Water

### Outcome

Water consumption is managed efficiently to avoid degradation of the resource, ensure its quality and future availability.

### Criterion A.2.1. (Critical)

The organization plans the rational use of water and monitors the results of this effort.

### Outcome

The rational water use plan works efficiently (maximizing positive impacts and minimizing the negative); and it is continuously improved.

### Indicator A.2.1.1 (Critical) (\*)

An action plan for rational water use and saving is documented in writing.

### Evaluation Requirements

*An annually updated plan, which describes at least the following: a) intended actions to reduce consumption at operator offices and encourage rational use of water among suppliers; and b) actions to encourage rational water use among clients and employees.*

*The action plan for water savings and rational use must specify which water sources the organizations uses. (e.g.: municipal, governmental, private, etc.).*

### Indicator A.2.1.2

Goals have been set to reduce or keep water consumption within rational use parameters.

### Indicator A.2.1.3

A specific organizational unit or staff member is appointed to implement the actions defined on the water rational use plan and to assess its results.



#### **Criterion A.2.2. (Critical)**

The organization implements specific actions to track its use of water and to improve and promote the rational use of this resource.

#### **Outcome**

The organization's water consumption is reduced, its degradation prevented to preserve its quality; and future availability is not jeopardized.

#### **Indicator A.2.2.1 (Critical)**

Meters are installed to measure water consumption.

#### **Indicator A.2.2.2 (Critical) (\*)**

The organization monitors and keeps records of its water consumption.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The water consumption records must include data for the 12 months previous to the audit. Nonetheless, during initial assessments, it will be conditionally accepted that the organization provides only 6 months of consumption records.*

#### **Indicator A.2.2.3 (Critical) (\*)**

The organization assesses the results of its water consumption records to continuously improve its performance.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The consumption records required in indicator A.2.2.2, must provide data of at least 6 months previous to the audit in order to assess, and in suitable cases, grant compliance for this indicator.*

*It must show that assessments of water consumption results are carried out at least once a year, describing the way in which these are completed and the actions that derive from these, at least on the planning level (there is no specific format available for this process).*





#### Indicator A.2.2.4 (\*)

Water saving devices are used to reduce consumption in all possible areas.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*In order to comply fully with this indicator, the organization must prove in a clear and measurable manner that the use of water saving devices is applied to at least 75% of its facilities where this is possible.*

#### Indicator A.2.2.5 (\*)

Information is available to encourage clients and staff participation in the organization's water saving efforts.

#### Criterion A.2.3.

The organization ensures the rational use of its own water sources.

#### Outcome

The organization own water sources are managed efficiently and their degradation prevented to preserve their quality and future availability.

#### Indicator A.2.3.1 (\*)

Specific actions are taken to ensure the rational use of the organization's own water sources.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The organization must provide technical information that demonstrates the implementation of formal actions in order to guarantee the sustainable use of its own water source(s), without compromising future water availability, nor affecting the natural water flows or streams.*

#### Indicator A.2.3.2

Specific actions are taken to prevent potentially polluting activities near water sources.



### Principle A.3.

## Rational Use of Energy

### Outcome

Energy consumption is managed efficiently and the use of alternative sources for clean generation is maximized.

### Criterion A.3.1.

The organization plans the rational use of energy and monitors the results of this effort.

### Outcome

The rational energy use plan works efficiently (maximizing positive impacts and minimizing the negative); and it is continuously improved.

### Indicator A.3.1.1 (\*)

An action plan for rational energy use and energy saving is documented in writing.

### *Evaluation Requirements*

*An annually updated plan, which describes at least the following: a) intended actions to reduce consumption at operator offices and encourage rational use of energy among suppliers; and b) actions to encourage rational energy use among clients and employees.*

*The savings and rational use energy plan must identify the sources of energy supply used by the organization, defining percentages of renewable versus nonrenewable energy.*

### Indicator A.3.1.2

Goals have been set to reduce or keep energy consumption within rational use parameters.

### Indicator A.3.1.3

A specific organizational unit or staff member is appointed to implement the actions defined on the energy rational use plan and to assess its results.



#### Criterion A.3.2.

The organization implements specific actions to track its energy consumption and to improve and promote the rational use of this resource.

#### Outcome

The organization's energy consumption is reduced and does not jeopardize the provision of this resource to the surrounding communities.

#### Indicator A.3.2.1

Meters are installed for different operational areas to measure energy consumption.

#### Indicator A.3.2.2 (\*)

The organization monitors and keeps records of its energy consumption.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The energy consumption records must include data for the 12 months previous to the audit. Nonetheless, during initial assessments, it will be provisionally accepted that the organization provides only 6 months of consumption records.*

#### Indicator A.3.2.3 (\*)

The organization assesses the results of its energy consumption records to continuously improve its performance.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The consumption records required in indicator A.3.2.2 must provide data of at least 6 months previous to the audit in order to assess, and in suitable cases, grant compliance for this indicator.*

*It must show that assessments of results of energy consumption are carried out at least once a year, describing the way in which these are completed and the actions that derive from these, at least on the planning level (there is no specific format available for this process).*



#### Indicator A.3.2.4

The purchasing policy includes criteria to favor the acquisition of energy efficient equipment and saving devices.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*In order to be able to comply with this indicator, the organization must have documented a sustainable purchasing policy required in critical indicator E.7.1.1. Likewise it must be able to prove that this policy defines specific technical criteria for the assessment and acquisition of energy efficient equipment and devices.*

#### Indicator A.3.2.6 (\*)

Energy efficient equipment and energy saving devices are used to reduce consumption where possible.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*In order to comply fully with this indicator, the organization must prove in a clear and quantifiable manner that the use of energy saving devices and energy efficient equipment, is applied to at least 75% of all possible cases.*

#### Indicator A.3.2.7 (\*)

Specific actions are taken to ensure equipment and devices that consume energy are turned off when they are not in use.

#### Indicator A.3.2.8 (\*)

Information is available to encourage clients and staff participation in the organization's efforts to save energy.

#### Criterion A.3.3.

The organization takes advantage of natural dynamics and alternative sources to generate energy.

#### Outcome

The pollution caused by energy consumption is reduced by using alternative sources for clean energy generation.

#### Indicator A.3.3.1

The organization takes advantage of natural light, heat, and ventilation to reduce energy consumption in their facilities.

#### Indicator A.3.3.3

The organization uses renewable sources or alternative technologies to source energy needs for its operations.



#### Principle A.4.

## Protection of Biodiversity

### Outcome

Natural ecosystems are protected and the loss of biodiversity is prevented.

### Criterion A.4.1. (Critical)

The organization prevents or reverses the negative conversion of ecosystems as a result of its operations.

### Outcome

Ecosystems maintain and / or recover their natural characteristics.

### Indicator A.4.1.1 (Critical) (\*)

Constructions made during the last 5 years do not imply actions that produced negative conversion of ecosystems.

### Evaluation Requirements

*The organization must show that it has the proper environmental management tools in place in order to prevent negative conversion of the ecosystems where its facilities and operations are located. The environmental management tool(s) clearly outline foreseen measures in order to mitigate and/or compensate for the impact caused by construction of any infrastructure.*

### Indicator A.4.1.2 (Critical) (\*)

The organization recovers or compensates the negative conversion of ecosystems caused by its constructions and/or operations (prior to the 5 years mentioned above).

### Evaluation Requirements

*The organization demonstrates through concrete evidence the implementation of measures in order to promote the recovery of the ecosystem where its facilities and operations are located; and compensate the negative impact these might have caused prior to the 5 years mentioned in critical indicator A.4.1.1.*

### Indicator A.4.1.4

Firewood used comes from sustainably managed sources.



**Criterion A.4.2.**

The organization guarantees the protection of native flora and fauna species.

**Outcome**

The biodiversity of native flora and fauna species is protected.

**Indicator A.4.2.1 (\*)**

The organization does not support the sale, trafficking or display of wild species, unless they are part of a legally established breeding and/or reproduction program.

**Indicator A.4.2.2 (\*)**

The organization does not use or trade with threatened or endangered species.

**Indicator A.4.2.3 (\*)**

Wildlife is not fed during visits or tours operated by the organization at natural areas.

**Indicator A.4.2.4 (\*)**

Staff informs passengers about the adverse impacts caused by feeding wild animals.

**Indicator A.4.2.5 (\*)**

The lighting of the organization's facilities and/or activities does not affect the habitat and behavior of wildlife.

**Indicator A.4.2.6 (\*)**

The organization does not generate nor allow excessive noise that alters the behavior of wildlife.



**Criterion A.4.3.**

The organization avoids or reverses the introduction of invasive exotic species.

**Outcome**

Ecosystems are protected from the invasion of exotic species.

**Indicator A.4.3.1 (\*)**

The organization does not use exotic species (plants or animals) that may alter natural ecosystems.

**Indicator A.4.3.2 (\*)**

Preference is given to the use of native plants for landscaping.



## Principle A.5.

# Conservation of Natural Areas

### Outcome

Natural areas, land and water, are protected, due to their importance in the conservation of biodiversity and other benefits associated to cultural, scientific landscape and environmental services.

### Criterion A.5.1.

The organization takes specific actions to ensure the conservation, management and/or maintenance of a natural protected area.

### Outcome

At least one natural area, land or water, is preserved, managed and/or maintained to assist the protection and preservation of its ecosystems.

### Indicator A.5.1.1 (\*)

The organization formally supports or directly maintains the conservation of a natural area, either public or private.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*Ideally, these actions must correspond to specific objectives defined in the organization's sustainability policy (Critical indicator E.1.1.2). However, even when this is not the case, these actions must include, regardless of type, clear records that prove that this is a formal and constant action in favor of a protected natural area for conservation or investigation purposes.*

### Indicator A.5.1.2 (\*)

The organization informs its passengers on how to behave responsibly when visiting natural and conservation areas.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The organization informs all its passengers concerning the codes of conduct or recommended behavior to follow when visiting natural conservation and protected reserves.*

*Ideally this should be proven by the existence and general availability of a code of conduct available for this end. However, it is also admissible if implemented through activities derived from the sustainability education program mentioned in critical indicator E.8.1.1.*





**Criterion A.5.2.**

The organization complies with all regulations applicable to its operations within natural protected areas.

**Outcome**

Regional, national and international regulations for activities within natural protected areas are met to guarantee the protection of these ecosystems.

**Indicator A.5.2.1 (\*)**

The organization is in compliance with all regulations applicable within the natural protected areas where it performs tourist activities.

**Indicator A.5.2.2 (\*)**

The organization has all the required permits and or licenses to operate within a natural protected area.



Principle A.6.

## Prevention of Pollution

### Outcome

Pollutants generated by the organization are properly disposed of, to protect biodiversity and human health.

### Criterion A.6.1. (Critical)

The organization does not affect water, soil, and/or air with contaminating substances used, produced, or generated by its operations.

### Outcome

Water, soil, and/or air are not affected negatively by pollutants used/generated by the organization.

### Indicator A.6.1.1 (\*)

Preference is given to the use of biodegradable and/or environmentally friendly cleaning and personal hygiene products.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*The organization has the necessary International Chemical Safety Cards (ICSCs) of all chemical agents used in its cleaning and hygiene tasks. Furthermore, it shows to have carried out an assessment in order to determine whether the chemical substances used are the least harmful for the environment as well as for human health.*

*Despite the above mentioned, in cases where the use of chemical substances classed as highly hazardous cannot be avoided, the organization must demonstrate that its use and application is controlled, and in adherence to formal procedures to reduce potential risks to human and environmental health and safety.*

### Indicator A.6.1.2 (Critical) (\*)

The use of hazardous substances that are toxic to humans and the environment is avoided.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*The organization must prove that all the different cleaning, maintenance, fumigation and similar activities, abstain from the use of substances classed as highly hazardous according to the World Health Organization recommended classification of pesticides by hazard.*

*Nonetheless, in cases where the use of chemical substances classed as highly hazardous cannot be avoided, the organization must demonstrate that its use and application is controlled, and is in adherence to formal procedures to reduce potential risks to human and environmental health and safety.*



#### Indicator A.6.1.4

Specific actions are taken to properly manage all toxic and/or hazardous waste.

#### Criterion A.6.2.

The organization mitigates the polluting effects caused by its wastewaters.

#### Outcome

The polluting effects caused by wastewaters are identified and mitigated.

#### Indicator A.6.2.1 (\*)

A wastewater treatment system is in place and works efficiently.

#### ***Evaluation Requirements***

*All wastewater produced from the organization's operations are deposited into a wastewater treatment system avoiding negative or adverse effects to any fragile ecosystems, the local population and the environment.*

*In cases where it applies, it is also acceptable to deposit the wastewater into the local treatment system, approved by the country's government, state or municipality.*

#### Indicator A.6.2.2 (\*)

Records are kept to demonstrate the timely maintenance of the wastewater treatment system.



Principle A.7.

## Solid Waste Management

### Outcome

Negative impact from solid waste disposal on ecosystems and human health is minimized.

### Criterion A.7.1. (Critical)

The organization plans the reduction and responsible management of its solid waste.

### Outcome

The solid waste reduction and management plan works efficiently (maximizing positive impacts and minimizing the negative); and it is continuously improved.

### Indicator A.7.1.1 (Critical) (\*)

The solid waste management plan is documented in writing.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*An updated plan that includes at least the following: a) intended actions to promote the reduction of solid waste generated by the organization's operations; b) procedures for responsible management (reuse, recycling and/or final disposal); and c) actions to encourage reduction and responsible management of waste among passengers and employees.*

*The plan must take into consideration strategies and specific procedures for the reduction and/or responsible management of the following types of waste: a. Organic (dry and wet); b. Inorganic recyclable waste (e.g.: glass, cans, paper, aluminum, cardboard, plastic); c. construction waste; d. non-traditional or requiring special handling; and e. Toxic or hazardous.*

### Indicator A.7.1.2

Staff is trained on the importance and the implementation of the solid waste management plan.

### Indicator A.7.1.3 (\*)

The purchasing policy defines the selection criteria for rejecting and reducing supplies that produce more waste.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*In order to comply fully with this indicator, the organization must have documented the sustainable purchasing policy required by critical indicator E.7.1.1. Furthermore, it must demonstrate that this policy includes selection criteria aimed at reducing the consumption of supplies that produce more waste.*



#### Criterion A.7.2.

The organization implements specific actions to reduce its solid waste.

#### Outcome

The amount of solid waste produced by the organization is reduced through adopting consumption practices that prefer the use of environmentally friendly products and goods.

#### Indicator A.7.2.1 (\*)

Wherever possible, preference is given to supplies purchased in bulk, reducing the use of small individual packages.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*The action referred to in this indicator must be proven through statistical data and concrete examples of its implementation. However, the foundation of this is directly linked to the existence of a sustainable purchasing policy; therefore, the non-compliance or partial compliance of critical indicator E.7.1.1, will have a direct effect on the full compliance of this indicator.*

#### Indicator A.7.2.2 (\*)

Reusable, refillable, and/or recyclable containers and devices are used for products/supplies in small individual packages.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*The action referred to in this indicator must be proven through statistical data and concrete examples of its implementation. However, the foundation of this is directly linked to the existence of a sustainable purchasing policy; therefore, the non-compliance or partial compliance of critical indicator E.7.1.1, will have a direct effect on the full compliance of this indicator.*

#### Indicator A.7.2.3

The organization uses recycled paper. FSC certified paper or paper certified by another independent certification is acceptable as long as responsible sourcing of materials is assured.

#### Evaluation Requirements

*The action referred to in this indicator must be proven through statistical data and concrete examples of its implementation. However, the foundation of this is directly linked to the existence of a sustainable purchasing policy; therefore, the non-compliance or partial compliance of critical indicator E.7.1.1, will have a direct effect on the full compliance of this indicator.*



#### **Indicator A.7.2.4 (\*)**

The organization avoids the use of disposable materials.

#### **Evaluation Requirements**

*The action referred to in this indicator must be proven through statistical data and concrete examples of its implementation. However, the foundation of this is directly linked to the existence of a sustainable purchasing policy; therefore, the non-compliance or partial compliance of critical indicator E.7.1.1, will have a direct effect on the full compliance of this indicator.*

#### **Indicator A.7.2.5 (\*)**

Records are kept on the amount, and type of waste generated by its operations.

#### **Criterion A.7.3.**

**Waste generated by the operation is recycled and properly disposed of.**

#### **Outcome**

**Proper disposal of solid waste reduces the negative effects to ecosystems and human health.**

#### **Indicator A.7.3.2 (\*)**

All waste generated in the organization is separated for proper management or disposal.

#### **Indicator A.7.3.3**

There is a clean and tidy area where waste is stored prior to final disposal.

#### **Indicator A.7.3.4 (\*)**

Waste collection services hired are safe and legal.



**Indicator A.7.3.5**

When possible, construction residues are reused.

**Indicator A.7.3.6**

Construction residues and non-traditional waste are disposed of in an environmentally proper manner.

**Indicator A.7.3.7**

Signs and information are available to encourage client and staff participation in the organization's efforts to reduce and manage waste responsibly.

**Indicator A.7.3.8 (\*)**

The organization aims at all inorganic waste that has been separated going to recycling or being reused.

**Indicator A.7.3.9**

All produced organic waste is properly managed.