

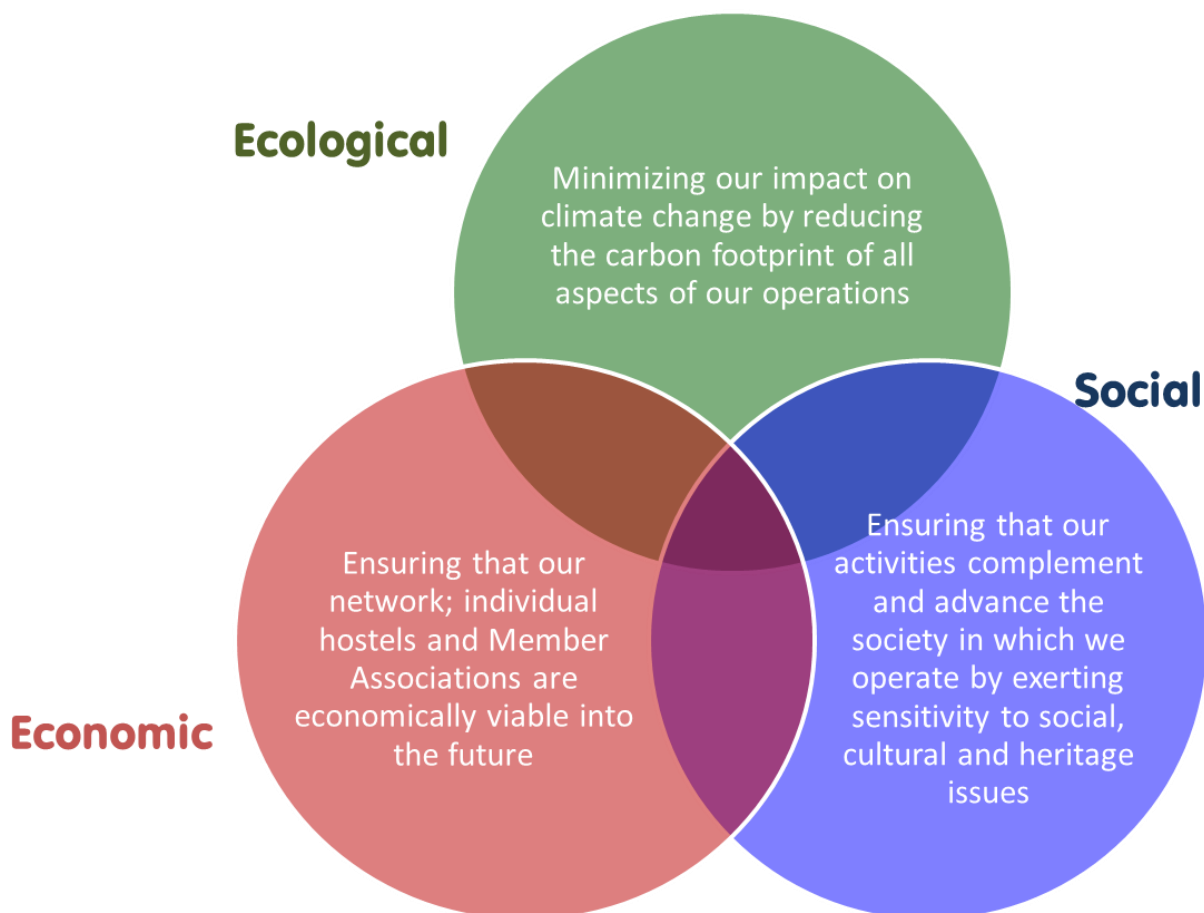
HI Sustainability Charter

Our policy in sustainable tourism

Introduction

Hostelling International, and its Member Associations, commit to intensifying their efforts to achieve a worldwide network of sustainable organisations and hostels.

In doing so, we recognize that true sustainability involves the development of clear and measurable objectives in the following areas:



HI and each member organisation are firmly engaged in all three dimensions.

Climate change, resulting from human generated carbon pollution, places the ecological aspects at the forefront.



HI Minimum Standards in Sustainable Tourism; The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria

The Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC Partnership), HI and its member organisations aim to attain the highest criteria of a worldwide sustainable tourism industry. The GSTC Partnership is a coalition of over 40 organizations working together to foster increased understanding of sustainable tourism practices and the adoption of universal sustainable tourism principles.

The GSTC Partnership, which was initiated by Rainforest Alliance, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Foundation, and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), launched the Sustainable Tourism Criteria at the World Conservation Congress in October 2008. These criteria will be the minimum standard that any tourism business should aspire to reach in order to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for poverty alleviation.

The GSTC criteria, adapted to the circumstances of HI and its National Associations, will be the basis for minimum standards in all three dimensions of sustainability - society, economy, ecology. Accordingly, HI and his member associations will aim to:

- + Demonstrate effective sustainable management**
- + Maximizing social and economic benefits to the local community and minimizing negative impacts**
- + Maximizing benefits to cultural heritage and minimizing negative impacts**
- + Maximizing benefits to the environment and minimizing negative impacts**
- + Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems, and landscapes**



1. Demonstrate effective sustainable management by:

- **Implementing** a long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its reality and scope, and which addresses environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, health, and safety issues.
- **Complying** with all applicable local to international legislation and regulations (including, health, safety, labour, and environmental aspects).
- **Ensuring** that all personnel receive periodic guidance and training regarding their roles and responsibilities with respect to environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, health, and safety issues.
- **Ensuring** that all hostels meet Minimum Standards.
- **Introducing** an HI-Q or HI-Q recognized Quality management system into all hostels.
- **Measuring** customer satisfaction, including sustainability aspects, and taking corrective action.
- **Ensuring** that promotional materials are accurate and complete with regard to the organization and its products and services, including sustainability claims and do not promise more than is being delivered.
- **Ensuring planning, design, renovation, operation, demolition and construction of** buildings and infrastructure comply with zoning requirements and with laws related to protected areas and heritage consideration;
- **Respecting** the natural and cultural heritage surroundings in planning, siting, design, and impact assessment,;
- **Using** locally appropriate sustainable practices and materials;
- **Providing** access for persons with special needs, where appropriate.
- **Providing** information about, and interpretation of, the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage to members and guests, as well as explaining appropriate behaviour while visiting natural areas, living cultures, and cultural heritage sites.
- **Ensuring land and water rights, and property acquisition** are legal, comply with local, communal and indigenous rights, including their free, prior and informed consent, and do not require involuntary resettlement.

2. Maximizing social and economic benefits to the local community and minimizing negative impacts by:

- Actively **supporting** initiatives for local infrastructure and social community development including, among others, education, training, health, and sanitation.
- **Giving** local residents equal opportunity for employment, including in management positions and ensuring all employees are equally offered regular training, experience and opportunities for advancement.



- **Purchasing** and offering local and fair-trade services and goods,
- **Offering** the means for local small entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products that are based on the area's nature, history, and culture (including food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.).
- **Developing and implementing** a documented code of conduct for activities in indigenous and local communities, with the consent of and in collaboration with the affected community.
- **Implementing** a policy against commercial, sexual or any other form of exploitation and harassment, particularly of children, adolescents, women and minorities.
- **Offering equal employment** opportunities to women, local minorities and others, including in management positions, while restraining child labour¹.
- **Ensuring** international or national legal protection of employees is respected, and employees are paid at least a living wage.
- **Ensuring** that the activities of the organization do not jeopardize the provision of basic services, such as water, energy, healthcare or sanitation, to neighbouring communities.
- **Ensuring** that the activities of the organization do not adversely affect local access to livelihoods, including land and aquatic resource use, rights-of-way, transport and housing.

3. Maximizing benefits to cultural heritage and minimizing negative impacts by:

- **Following** established guidelines or a code of behaviour for visits to culturally or historically sensitive sites, in order to minimize visitor impact and maximize enjoyment.
- **Ensuring** that historical and archaeological artefacts are not sold, traded, or displayed, except as permitted by local to international law.
- **Contributing** to the protection and preservation of local historical, archaeological, culturally and spiritually important properties and sites, whilst not impeding access to them by local residents.
- **Incorporating** elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage in its operations, design, decoration, food, or shops; while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.

¹ Child labour is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, and interferes with their schooling by; depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.



4. Maximizing benefits to the environment and minimizing negative impacts by:

- **Conserving** resources by ensuring that
 - Purchasing policies favour locally appropriate and ecologically sustainable products, including building materials, capital goods, food, beverages and consumables.
 - The purchase of disposable and consumable goods is measured, and the organization actively seeks ways to reduce their use.
 - Energy consumption is measured, sources are indicated, and measures are adopted to minimize overall consumption, and encourage the use of renewable energy.
 - Water consumption is measured, sources are indicated, and measures are adopted to minimize overall consumption.
 - Water sourcing is sustainable, and does not adversely affect environmental flows.
- **Reducing** carbon pollution by ensuring that:
 - Greenhouse gas emissions from all sources controlled by the organization are measured, procedures are implemented to minimize them, and offsetting remaining emissions is encouraged.
 - Customers, staff, suppliers and members are encouraged to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Wastewater, including grey water, is treated effectively and is only reused or released safely, with no adverse effects to the local population and the environment.
 - Waste is measured, mechanisms are in place to reduce waste, and where reduction is not feasible, to re-use or recycle it.
 - Any residual waste disposal has no adverse effect on the local population and the environment. .
 - The use of harmful substances, including pesticides, paints, swimming pool disinfectants and cleaning materials, is minimized, and substituted when available, by innocuous products or processes
 - All storage, use, handling, and disposal of chemicals is properly managed.
- Practices are implemented to minimize pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, air, and water and soil contamination



5. Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems, and landscapes by:

- **Ensuring** that wildlife species are not harvested from the wild or consumed, displayed, sold, or internationally traded, except as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilization is sustainable and in compliance with local to international laws.
 - **Ensuring no captive wildlife is held**, except for properly regulated activities, in compliance with local to international laws and living specimens of protected and wildlife species are only kept by those authorized and suitably equipped to house and care for them humanely.
 - **Using** native species for landscaping and restoration, wherever feasible, particularly in natural landscapes and measures are taken to avoid the introduction of invasive alien species.
 - **Supporting** biodiversity conservation, including natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value.
 - **Ensuring** that interactions with wildlife, taking into account cumulative impacts, do not produce adverse effects on the viability and behaviour of populations in the wild, and any disturbance of natural ecosystems is minimized, rehabilitated, and there is a compensatory contribution to conservation management.
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