

Summary



Developing criteria for the sustainable structuring of tourism destinations in Germany

On behalf of:

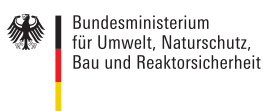


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In Germany there are already a great many good examples of how tourism regions are bringing sustainable development, which can seem an unwieldy concept, to life. The federal competition on sustainable tourism regions provided the first solid set of data for possible approaches to structuring local tourism services sustainably. The competition also, however, highlighted the need for a comprehensive set of steps and practical guidelines on how to make tourism regions more sustainable. Often, destination managers do not know how to go about integrating the principles of sustainable development into their tourism activities in practice. The focus must therefore now be on maintaining the momentum and building on it in line with international approaches to sustainable destination management. To this end, a research project conducted by BTE Tourismus und Regionalberatung elaborated generally applicable, sound criteria accompanied by indicator suggestions for developing sustainable tourism destinations in Germany.

The criteria were drawn up in a very broad participative process involving over 50 stakeholders from politics, tourism, environmental protection, nature conservation and the scientific community. Besides national instruments, all recognised EU and international standards, recommendations and criteria on sustainable tourism were incorporated in order to generate vital synergies with other existing systems.

The criteria system developed by the project provides destination managers with their first practical aid on how to structure their destination sustainably. The criteria are supplemented with guidelines containing detailed recommendations for action and implementation aids for tourism decision-makers in the destinations. The project sets out important principles for the sustainable development of tourism in Germany and lays the foundation for the German tourism sector's contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda.

With this overview we invite other European and international tourism stakeholders to use the criteria and recommendations developed in the research project as a framework for establishing sustainable tourism across Europe.

Dirk Dunkelberg
Deutscher Tourismusverband e.V.



Developing criteria for the sustainable structuring of tourism destinations in Germany

At the request of the German Bundestag's Committee on Tourism, the federal competition on sustainable tourism regions 2012/2013 was held to provide incentives for sustainable tourism in Germany and to support rural regions. The competition focused on fostering sustainable tourism as a means of strengthening the economies of structurally weak areas, while at the same time conserving biological diversity and other natural capital and supporting cultural heritage, resource and energy efficiency.

Many of the tourism regions taking part in the competition voiced the need for a set of criteria to help them implement sustainable development in their destinations. Up to now there have been no comprehensive nationally applicable criteria and indicators providing guidance for German tourism destinations wishing to move towards sustainable development. The competition provided excellent impetus for the subsequent research-based formulation of such criteria and indicators.

Starting situation

Insufficient availability

The German report *Reiseanalyse 2014*, a study on the domestic demand for sustainable tourism, has shown that while many Germans wish to travel in an ecologically and socially sustainable way, they frequently find this impossible in practice due to insufficient availa-

bility. Sustainable products and services on offer are few and far between and access to reliable information is poor. In this context, the onus is on the regions concerned to gear their tourism structures and activities to the principles of sustainable development.

New standards

As basic guidelines for the sustainable development of tourism worldwide, the **Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC)** were developed in 2012 and made destination-specific (GSTC-D) a little later. The aim of this globally applicable standard is to provide a baseline for destinations throughout the world and initiate processes for promoting the sustainable development of destinations. The GSTC have not yet been applied to German destinations and one of the aims of the research project is to move forward in this regard.

In its **European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS)**, the European Commission set itself the goal of making an instrument available for measuring and consistently improving sustainable development of a destination. The system is based on empirical measurement indicators and is particularly useful for monitoring progress in a destination. ETIS is currently being tested, including in some German destinations. As part of the research project, several key indicators were incorporated into the criteria system with the aim of harmonising the measurability of sustainable development.



New global development goals – 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, containing 17 **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. The SDGs combine the goals for promoting development in poor countries with global goals for sustainable development, and comprehensively describe the responsibilities of all countries, including developed countries, in a single framework². Tourism is also explicitly named as an instrument for implementing the goals. Goal 8 lists sub-targets for sustainable economic development, calling, under 8.9, for nations to devise and implement policies by 2030 that promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products. Furthermore, Goal 12 specifies that sustainable consumption and production patterns should be ensured, while Goal 12b refers specifically to tourism: “Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.”

A flood of labels

Besides global and European standards, there are a plethora of certification systems and guidelines for regions, destinations, municipalities, protected areas, etc. There is a veritable flood of labels relating to sustainable tourism and a vast number of specified criteria. **To es-**

tablish a sound database that is compatible with other systems, the research project compared and evaluated existing national, EU and international destination criteria for sustainable tourism in the form of standards, certification systems, guidelines and competitions.

Developments in Germany

A number of German Länder, such as Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg and Lower Saxony, are clearly making serious efforts to achieve sustainable development of their tourism destinations. Examples include establishing coordination offices to deal with sustainable tourism issues, elaborating action strategies for tourism and issuing certification for destinations.

The research project therefore set out to provide practical assistance for tourism regions in their move towards sustainable development and to create a basis for the first national recommendations on developing sustainable tourism regions. To achieve this, the project developed a comprehensive set of nationally applicable criteria and indicators to act as a guideline for tourism regions. The criteria and the accompanying toolkit for implementation offer destinations support in moving towards sustainable development. **The project does not aim to create yet another certification system or more labels, but rather to generate synergies with systems already in place.** At the same time, the criteria and indicators lay the groundwork for regions for monitoring the sustainable development of tourism in Germany as set out in the 2030 Agenda’s Sustainable Development Goals.

² Further information is available at: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals

Participative development process

The sustainable development criteria for German tourism destinations were drawn up in a participative process with a very broad scope and the involvement of over 50 stakeholders from politics, tourism, environmental protection, nature conservation and the scientific community.

A detailed analysis phase examined secondary literature and key documents and regulations deemed seminal for the field of sustainable tourism².

The next step involved **the analysis of over 1,300 criteria and indicators drawn from the 18 leading international and national criteria systems**. These were then grouped in clusters based on their content. The criteria and indicators were evaluated in terms of their relevance, ties to specific actors, practicability, data availability, measurability and monitorability. Finally, the data derived from this process were harmonised with the requirements of the studied regulations, and initial fields of action and categories for sustainable tourism were developed.

² These included: UNWTO 2001: Global Code of Ethics for Tourism; UNWTO 2004: Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations; UNWTO/UNEP 2005: Making Tourism More Sustainable. A Guide for Policy Makers; UNWTO 2013 : Sustainable Tourism for Development; United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals (As of: April 2015); UNEP: The Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism; German Federal Government: Nationale Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie „Perspektiven für Deutschland“; German Tourist Association (Deutscher Tourismus Verband): Positionspapier zur nachhaltigen Entwicklung

Standards/ recommendations/ guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations (GSTC-D) ▪ Global Reporting Initiative (Version 4) ▪ European Ecotourism Labelling Standard (EELTS) ▪ Leitfaden zur Integration von biologischer Vielfalt in CSR-Prozesse in der Tourismusindustrie ▪ Qualitätsoffensive Naturparke ▪ German Sustainability Code
Certifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Green Globe Travel Industry ▪ Travelife ▪ Alpine Pearls ▪ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas ▪ Viabono für Kommunen ▪ Destination certification “Nachhaltigkeits-Check” ▪ Economy for the Common Good
Monitoring systems/ competitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS) ▪ GSTR / Green Destinations ▪ Indikatorensystem für den Ostseeraum ▪ EDEN Award 2010 in Germany ▪ Bundeswettbewerb Nachhaltige Tourismusregionen 2012/13 (federal competition on sustainable tourism regions 2012/13)



The content requirements of criteria and indicators were then discussed constructively in expert talks with **destination managers from five award-winning regions from the federal competition on sustainable tourism regions 2012/2013**. In personal interviews, the leadership of the destination management organisations (DMOs) shared practical experiences, discussed the requirements regarding relevance, management, and practicability and provided feedback on the initial criteria design.

In order to take into account the requirements experts have for sustainable development standards and criteria and to establish synergies with existing sustainable development systems, five representatives of Europe's leading sustainable development standards and certification schemes were invited to a **certifiers' round table**. For the very first time, representatives from Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC), Green Globe, ETIS, Viabono and TourCert came together to discuss the key issues for specialists in this context. Discussion focused primarily on topics related generally to practicability and the implementation of sustainable development criteria in destinations as well as the relevance, measurability and practical im-

plementation of criteria developed in the context of the BTE research project.

In addition, an expert workshop was held with **representatives from a broad range of German institutions and organisations such as Länder marketing associations, DMOs and research entities**. The workshop provided an opportunity for acquiring important input on the design of the criteria and indicators.

An advisory board assisted with the entire project.

The board was composed of representatives from politics, national and Länder tourism organisations, tourism umbrella associations, nature conservation and transport stakeholders. The board held regular meetings to monitor the technical quality of the project's work.

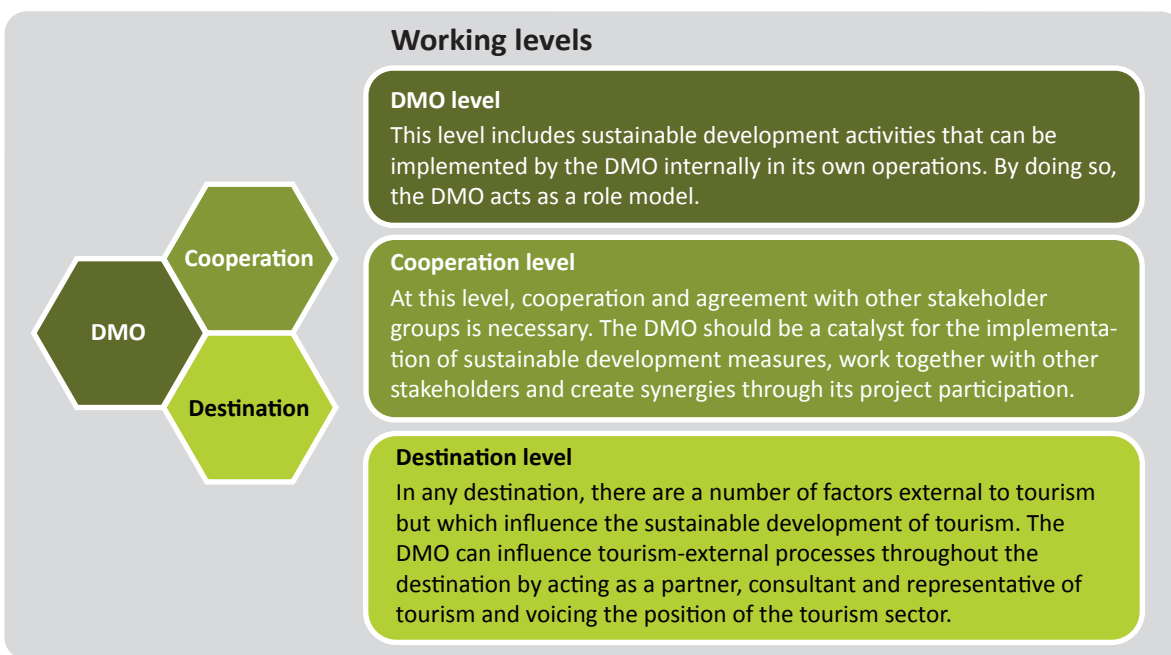
All of the analyses and coordination culminated in criteria for the sustainable development of German tourism destinations. These criteria and accompanying guidelines provide DMO representatives with their first practical and comprehensive recommendations and guidance for sustainably developing their destinations.

Criteria for the sustainable structuring of tourism destinations

The criteria system presents a total of **40 action recommendations** for making tourism destinations sustainable and covers all of the dimensions of sustainable development. **40 criteria** divided into **eight fields of action** are introduced, accompanied by **67 measurable monitoring indicators**.

Action levels for making tourism destinations sustainable

The criteria take into account the complexity and structural diversity of destinations and require close cooperation between key stakeholders, the destination management organisation (DMO) and the participating service providers within the destination. The DMO is the main contact for all local stakeholders/partners and coordinates the common path toward sustainable development. To achieve the sustainable development criteria, the DMO must be actively engaged on three different levels:

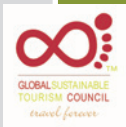


Using the criteria

The criteria system introduces eight fields of action for making a destination sustainable. Each field of action has its own criteria, which are explained briefly. The criteria are assigned to levels of action that indicate which sphere of responsibility each criterion belongs to (see above). (see above). On the basis of the indicators, tourism decision-makers can check and rate the respective actual situation for each criterion. Each criterion also uses content from other sustainable development systems (see above), which are marked by symbols. Tourism decision-makers can thus see which sustainable development systems have similar requirements.

Don't reinvent the wheel

The fields of action and criteria are based on key requirements from other existing sustainable development standards and criteria systems. **By fulfilling the criteria, the destination will also meet most of the following systems' requirements:**



Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations (GSTC-D): The GSTC are considered the minimum standards for the common international understanding of sustainable tourism.

For more information: www.gstcouncil.org



European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS): The ETIS is an instrument for measuring and continually improving sustainable development in a destination. The indicators are intended to create more transparency and comparability with regard to the sustainable development activities of European destinations.

For more information: <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable>



German Sustainability Code: The German Sustainability Code (DNK) provides a German framework for non-financial reporting for organisations and businesses of every size and legal structure. The system outlines the minimum requirements for German organisations with regard to reporting on aspects of sustainable development.

For more information: <http://www.deutscher-nachhaltigkeitskodex.de>



Destination certification "Nachhaltigkeits-Check": The Nachhaltigkeits-Check is a German system for certifying sustainable development of tourism destinations. The new certification procedure is intended to intensify destinations' engagement with the topic of sustainable development.

For more information (in German only): <https://mlr.baden-wuerttemberg.de/?id=6746>

Criteria for sustainable tourist destinations

1. THE MANAGEMENT DIMENSION

Strategy and planning (SP): Governance mechanisms are in place that create optimal conditions for sustainable structuring of the destination.

No.	Criterion / Brief explanation	Indicator	Systems
D	<p>SP1 There is a political commitment to sustainable development in the destination, or decisions have been taken by political bodies that support sustainable development.</p> <p>The destination management organisation (DMO) is informed about the existence of regional sustainable development strategies and is familiar with the most important goals, areas of activity, and criteria.</p>	Existence of a regional sustainable development strategy for the tourist area.	
K	<p>SP2 Existence of a tourism strategy tailored to the area, which takes into account aspects of sustainable development.</p> <p>The destination has a tourism plan (e.g. tourism strategy, destination strategy, tourism mission statement, etc.). The plan incorporates the three dimensions of sustainable development and describes the opportunities and risks presented by tourism. The DMO regularly evaluates the strategy using measurable objectives.</p>	Existence of a strategy/action plan for sustainable tourism development that includes agreed objectives and measures for monitoring, development control and evaluation.	
	<p>SP3 The destination has a viable destination management structure.</p> <p>An organisational structure that is competitive (marketable) and able to exert control (DMO) represents the destination. Various stakeholders participate in the DMO, which is responsible for a coordinated approach to tourism.</p> <p>The DMO has a corporate philosophy, mission statement or a management handbook relating to ecological responsibility, social responsibility for the region (external) and responsibility for employees/partners (internal).</p>	Number of communities, localities, districts in the region with above average tourism volume relative to regional levels. Percentage of communities, localities, districts in the region represented in the DMO. Existence of a DMO financial plan that is secure for the next three years. Existence of a publicly communicated DMO mission statement.	
K	<p>SP4 The DMO has identified important stakeholders in the destination and has regular and in-depth interaction with them.</p> <p>The DMO identifies socially and economically relevant stakeholders and integrates them into regular discussions about the sustainable development process in the destination.</p>	Existence of a procedure for identifying important destination stakeholders. Existence of a tourism committee, in which important interest groups participate; number of committee meetings/discussions per year.	
	<p>SP5 The destination's sustainable development activities are presented in a transparent way.</p> <p>The DMO internally and externally communicates the significance of sustainable development for the destination. The DMO gives visitors information about the destination's projects and initiatives related to sustainable development.</p> <p>Visitor awareness of the destination's sustainable development efforts and activities is regularly monitored, for example, in the framework of a visitor survey.</p>	Percentage of visitors who indicate that they are aware of the sustainable development efforts and activities in the destination. Visitor information and communication materials for tourism stakeholders describe activities/projects and initiatives for the sustainable development of the destination.	
DMO	<p>SP6 The DMO ensures the implementation of sustainable development goals in business operations.</p> <p>The DMO clearly sets out responsibilities and processes for sustainable development. These are regularly reviewed and documented for outside review.</p>	The DMO has a sustainable development officer or team, which is anchored in its organisational chart. The DMO has a voluntary verified certification/labelling for environmental/quality/sustainability and/or corporate social responsibility (CSR) measures.	
	<p>AG1 Destination advertisement is based on a communications strategy.</p> <p>A communications strategy and a marketing concept exists for the destination, as does an annual marketing plan that establishes strategy areas/topics, marketing objectives and activities.</p> <p>The communications of the DMO are accurate in their description of products and services, clearly address a defined target group, have a uniform corporate design and are available in several languages.</p> <p>Advertising messages present the destination/locations and the local inhabitants respectfully and provide a true and authentic representation of the destination.</p>	Existence of a communications strategy, marketing strategy and an annual marketing plan that articulates strategies, objectives and activities. Existence of a uniform corporate design for all of the DMO's communications. Number of complaints or incidents of criticism per year regarding authenticity, respectful representation and accuracy of advertising messages.	
	<p>AG2 The DMO motivates tourism service providers to implement sustainable development activities.</p> <p>The DMO actively supports sustainable development activities carried out by service providers and offers assistance for developing businesses sustainably.</p>	Number of tourism businesses in the destination that have environmental or sustainable development certification. Percentage of certified hotel/restaurant businesses in the destination.	
K	<p>AG3 The DMO actively supports the further development of quality consciousness among tourism stakeholders in the destination.</p> <p>The DMO collects and/or participates in the collection of destination-wide visitor satisfaction data on a regular basis.</p> <p>The DMO motivates tourism businesses in the destination to participate in quality campaigns, for example, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » organising informational events and supporting/arranging participation in seminars, » presenting businesses in regional catalogues, listing them in online selections, prioritising or promoting tourism businesses as lead products, conducting joint marketing activities, etc. 	Percentage of visitors that are satisfied with their overall experience in the destination. Percentage of visitors that make complaints per year. Number of tourism businesses with a quality distinction/award in comparison with two years ago.	
	<p>AG4 The destination has a strategy and specific measures related to visitor information and management aimed at managing visitor behaviour.</p> <p>The DMO provides appropriate visitor behaviour guidelines designed in cooperation with nature conservation authorities and cultural authorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Behaviour rules for ecologically sensitive sites – so that all tourist activities are in line with permitted usages; » Cultural behaviour guidelines for sensitive sites; » Code of practice for tour guides and operators; 	Existence of behaviour guidelines for tourist activities in sensitive areas and a code of practice for tour guides and operators.	
	<p>AG5 Tourist sites and attractions are designed to be accessible to people with disabilities and are accordingly labelled.</p> <p>Access to tourist sites and attractions is also possible for people with disabilities or others with specific access requirements, especially attractions of special cultural or natural significance in the destination. DMO communication materials highlight the topic of accessibility and sites/attractions are clearly marked as accessible.</p>	Number of tourism businesses with the certification "Reisen für Alle" (Travel for All).	
DMO	<p>AG6 The DMO evaluates sustainable product components in the development of products and services.</p> <p>The DMO defines which criteria are used to evaluate the sustainable development performance of tourism service providers (e.g. climate friendliness/low emissions, ecofriendly mobility, regional focus, cultural diversity, certified service providers, biodiversity, low impact on nature and landscape, etc.).</p>	Existence of a system for evaluating tourism businesses and services with regard to their sustainable development performance. Number of service providers verified as "sustainable" by the DMO.	
	<p>AG7 In its communications, the DMO highlights individual tourism service providers that are particularly sustainable.</p> <p>The DMO specially labels particularly sustainable product/service components and publicises them accordingly, on the basis of sustainable performance evaluation of tourism service providers.</p>	Percentage of product/service components that are publicised as "sustainable".	

2. THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Economic security (ÖS): Measures are undertaken to promote the long-term economic security of tourism stakeholders.

No.	Criterion / Brief explanation	Indicator	Systems
ÖS1	The DMO monitors the contribution of tourism to the regional economy with the goal of achieving appropriate growth for the destination while taking into account capacity limits. The DMO gathers data for evaluating the economic stability of the destination and defining objectives for appropriate growth that takes into account ecological and sociocultural stability. The DMO is familiar with the destination's tourism assets and attractions; these are divided into accommodation providers, tourist attractions and other tourism-related facilities.	Trends in number of overnight stays, bed occupancy rate in commercial accommodation and length of stay over the last three years. Total income from tourism in the region. Daily spending on tourism per visitor. Tax receipts from tourism in relation to arrivals; if possible, compared to a previous study of the regional economic effects of tourism.	 
ÖS2	Seasonal variability in tourism is compatible with the interests of local stakeholders. The DMO knows the monthly distribution of tourism arrivals and overnight stays. The DMO, together with tourism service providers, implements measures with the aim of distributing tourist activities seasonally in order to create a balance between the interests of the local tourism economy, the local people, the culture and the environment.	Distribution of arrivals and overnight stays in the peak and off seasons. Number of peak season months.	 
ÖS3	A broad spectrum of qualification measures related to sustainable tourism and other topics exists. The DMO publicises a broad array of qualification measures and communicates these actively to tourism service providers. The DMO regularly offers training and continuing education courses on sustainable development and other topics for its associates.	Number of qualification programmes publicised to tourism stakeholders by the DMO per year. Number of training and continuing education courses offered per DMO associate per year and percentage of these on sustainable development.	
Local well-being (LW): Tourism contributes to the economic well-being of the local population and stimulates local economic structures			
LW1	Regional stakeholders and their products are supported through their incorporation into the tourism supply chain. The DMO is familiar with and promotes typical local and regional products. The DMO works with regional stakeholders, associations and institutions to support tourism businesses in purchasing regional products and services as well as in regionalising catering and hospitality.	Existence of communication materials featuring regional products and service providers. Existence of regional labelling available to tourism stakeholders.	 
LW2	The use of certified products and services by tourism stakeholders is actively supported. The DMO works with initiatives, associations and institutions to support tourism businesses in using environmentally friendly and/or fair trade products in their operations.	Number of tourism businesses that publicise use of environmentally friendly (certified) and/or fair trade products.	 
LW3	The DMO sets guidelines for sustainable procurement. The DMO has guidelines for sustainable purchasing, for instance on regional products and services, or certified and fair trade products. Public calls for tender incorporate criteria requiring bidders to deliver products and services that are environmentally friendly and, where possible, sourced from the regional economy.	Percentage of regionally produced, sustainable and fair trade products used in the DMO.	
LW4	The quantity and quality of jobs in tourism is regularly reviewed and safeguarded. The DMO (along with industry associations and political institutions) is familiar with data on employment in tourism and follows topics like seasonal work, part-time work, employment of locals, gaps in needed professions, and demographic change.	Number of people employed in the tourism sector. Number of tourism businesses in the destination. Number of apprentices in the tourism sector. Events and committees on the topic of employment in tourism per year.	 

3. THE ECOLOGICAL DIMENSION

Protecting nature and the landscape (NL): Tourism contributes to the preservation and improvement of biodiversity and to the attractiveness of natural and cultural landscapes for visitors.

No.	Criterion / Brief explanation	Indicator	Systems
NL1	Tourism's impact on nature and the environment is regularly monitored. The DMO is familiar with the current status of the destination's ecosystem and with the main positive and negative effects tourist activities have on nature and the environment. This knowledge is obtained, for example, through regular coordination with and inquiries to environmental protection and nature conservation authorities. The DMO identifies tourist activities that cause increased environmental risks and actively discusses how to address these activities. Measures for avoiding and reducing environmental risks based on assessments are developed, with authorities if necessary.	Percentage of the total area designated as special protection areas (only if the destination includes special protection areas). Existence of a system for identifying environmental risks related to tourist activities. Existence of measures to reduce environmental risks.	 
NL2	There is cooperation between tourism decision-makers and nature conservation and environmental protection representatives. The DMO is actively involved in efforts to reduce conflict between tourism and nature conservation stakeholders. The DMO, nature conservation associations/stakeholders, special protection area administrators and/or nature conservation authorities have an active and close working relationship. The DMO and stakeholders in nature conservation and environmental protection carry out joint projects in the destination.	Tourism decision-makers are integrated into a panel association related to special protection areas (where special protection areas are relevant). Existence of joint projects involving the DMO and environmental protection and nature conservation stakeholders. Number of joint projects per year.	 
NL3	Preservation and protection of biodiversity is supported. The DMO is familiar with current tourism-relevant provisions for conserving biodiversity. Joint projects between nature conservation stakeholders and tourism service providers give visitors in the destination opportunities to experience biodiversity first-hand. The DMO motivates tourism businesses and visitors to become actively engaged in the protection of ecosystems and endangered animal and plant species.	Existence of a biodiversity management plan for the tourist area. Existence of product/service components and communication materials from the DMO that bring biodiversity to life.	 
NL4	The natural, regional landscapes and townscapes are preserved and supported through tourism. The DMO, tourism service providers, regional initiatives, local authorities and nature conservation authorities jointly coordinate: » tourism infrastructure planning that develops open spaces in harmony with nature and the regional character particular to the destination, » projects for preserving traditional man-made landscapes using appropriate management (e.g. meadow orchards), » projects for preserving and beautifying historical and cultural locations, special architectural features and support for regional architectural heritage.	Existence of cooperation between local authorities and nature conservation authorities in connection with projects related to landscapes and townscapes.	
NL5	Regionally coordinated visitor management creates high quality tourist signage and minimises conflicts between various interest and user groups. The DMO participates in developing a visitor management plan and strives to create uniformly high-quality tourist signage leading to tourist attractions and service providers. Visitor management also focuses on averting conflict between the different groups using a particular site.	Existence of consistent and uniform tourist signage to attractions and service providers.	
NL6	The DMO's open areas and outdoor facilities are developed and maintained in harmony with nature. The DMO company premises, grounds and the open spaces for which it is responsible (such as outdoor swimming areas/thermal baths, cultural facilities, beaches, spas, etc.) are constructed and maintained in harmony with nature, for example, by: not using pesticides/herbicides, promoting structural diversity in the various sections of its property, using native plants suited to the location, using products from sustainable businesses (tropical timber / Forest Stewardship Council procurement).	Existence of a management plan for the development of DMO company premises and outdoor facilities in harmony with nature.	

3. THE ECOLOGICAL DIMENSION

Resource management (RM): Scarce and non-renewable natural resources used in connection with tourism are used efficiently and sparingly.	
D	<p>RM1 The DMO has identified action areas for combating climate change that are relevant to the destination.</p> <p>The DMO is aware of existing regional climate action plans and familiar with the most relevant climate change risks for tourism, as well as with the measures for climate action and climate change adaptation that are relevant for tourism.</p> <p>RM2 Mobility plans for the destination ensure environmentally friendly mobility for tourists.</p> <p>The DMO is familiar with the tourist mobility plans in the destination and, through active involvement (at least on the regional level), ensures environmentally friendly transport for tourists.</p> <p>RM3 Use of local public transport and environmentally friendly mobility are supported in the destination.</p> <p>The DMO implements initiatives and measures to increase visitor use of environmentally friendly means of transport, to facilitate everyday function-oriented mobility locally and to advocate for environmentally friendly mobility during leisure time.</p> <p>RM4 Visitors are informed about environmentally friendly transport for arrival and departure.</p> <p>The DMO provides visitors with information about reaching the destination using environmentally friendly and/or public transport and encourages tourism service providers to do the same.</p> <p>RM5 Tourism decision-makers support tourism enterprises in implementing climate action measures and environmentally friendly behaviour.</p> <p>The DMO initiates or supports campaigns for reducing CO2 and for environmentally friendly behaviour in tourism businesses, such as energy checks, carbon footprint measurement, DEHOGA energy saving campaigns, trainings/courses or by organising specialist events and contests, providing consultation services, and raising awareness of forest shares and moor futures.</p> <p>RM6 Tourism decision-makers pursue strategies to reduce water consumption and waste generation in tourism businesses.</p> <p>The DMO provides information on and initiates or supports campaigns for reducing water consumption and waste generation in tourism businesses.</p> <p>RM7 The DMO takes internal measures to promote climate action and environmentally friendly employee behaviour.</p> <p>The DMO is familiar with the energy consumption of its own company, sets reduction targets and strives to use renewable energy where possible. Measures are taken to encourage environmentally friendly behaviour of DMO employees, in particular in the following areas: Business trips and motor pools, indoor climate and lighting, office supplies and waste, food and catering/hospitality.</p>
K	<p>RM1 Existence of an analysis on climate action and climate adaptation strategies for the destination.</p> <p>RM2 Existence of a networked mobility plan that connects various tourism-relevant modes of transport.</p> <p>RM3 Percentage of services advertised for tourists by the DMO that integrate environmentally friendly leisure-time mobility (muscle-powered activities or transport powered by renewable energy sources).</p> <p>RM4 Distribution showing types of transport used for guest arrivals and for mobility in the destination.</p> <p>Percentage of DMO informational materials that prominently promote public transport options.</p> <p>RM5 Percentage of tourism enterprises in contact with the DMO that are involved in climate action and climate adaptation measures.</p> <p>RM6 Informational materials have been produced on reducing water consumption and waste generation in tourism businesses.</p> <p>RM7 The DMO purchases green electricity.</p> <p>Existence of DMO reduction targets for its energy consumption.</p> <p>Existence of a plan of measures to support environmentally friendly behaviour of DMO employees.</p>
DMO	<p>RM1 </p> <p>RM2 </p> <p>RM3 </p> <p>RM4 </p> <p>RM5 </p> <p>RM6 </p> <p>RM7 </p>

4. THE SOCIAL DIMENSION

Culture and Identity (KI): Tourism respects and promotes historical heritage as well as regional culture and traditions, strengthening the regional identity in the destination.	
No.	<p>Criterion / Brief explanation</p>
K1	<p>Tourism supports the protection and preservation of cultural heritage.</p> <p>The DMO is included in planning related to protection of the cultural heritage of the destination.</p> <p>The DMO is familiar with important examples of the destination's cultural heritage and presents these for visitors in communication materials.</p>
K	<p>K12 Tourism decision-makers support special cultural heritage and traditions such as regional folk cultures, subcultures, festivals, arts and crafts and regional cuisine.</p> <p>The DMO communication materials highlight the special characteristics of the destination's intangible cultural heritage (e.g. language/colloquialisms/dialects, songs, music, art and theatre, industries or craft arts), as long as these do not raise ethical, moral or species conservation concerns. The DMO develops and markets corresponding tourist activities and events.</p> <p>Public interest and quality of life (GL): Tourism contributes to the preservation and promotion of public interests, equality, quality of life and fair participation for members of the host community.</p>
D	<p>GL1 A risk management system is in place for dangers to tourists' safety and health.</p> <p>The DMO is notified immediately by relevant offices in the event of acute safety or health risks for tourists. The DMO has a risk management plan; in the case of a safety/health restriction or threat, the plan provides for informing tourists and, if necessary, identifies consequences for tourist activities.</p> <p>GL2 Tourism decision-makers support equality in employment (diversity) and family-friendly working conditions in tourism businesses.</p> <p>The DMO works with associations, local authorities and other institutions in initiatives to support employment equality and family-friendly working conditions in the tourism businesses in the destination.</p> <p>GL3 Tourism decision-makers are familiar with and promote acceptance of tourism in the destination.</p> <p>The DMO organises or participates annually in public events related to important tourism developments and projects in the destination. The expectations, concerns and level of satisfaction of the local population with regard to tourism are regularly analysed and evaluated. For example, the DMO is aware of written complaints or local population actions connected to tourism concerns and the DMO includes questions related to tourism acceptance in surveys of local residents.</p> <p>GL4 Tourism decision-makers integrate voluntary citizen engagement and sustainable development initiatives into tourism projects.</p> <p>Volunteer organisations work in close cooperation with the DMO on specific projects. The DMO advocates social, ecological or cultural projects in the destination, for example in the form of sponsorships or volunteer activities for social initiatives or initiatives related to the preservation of natural and cultural diversity. Cooperation opportunities encourage tourism businesses to make their own contributions to volunteer activities and citizen engagement.</p> <p>GL5 The DMO ensures high-quality working conditions in its operations and guarantees equality in employment.</p> <p>The DMO takes steps exceeding the minimum legal requirements to increase the attractiveness of employment in the organisation.</p>
DMO	<p>K1 Existence of regular dialogue between the DMO and institutions that plan the preservation of cultural heritage.</p> <p>Existence of a list of the destination's examples of cultural heritage and its most noteworthy attractions.</p> <p>K12 Existence of communication materials presenting the special characteristics of the destination's intangible cultural heritage.</p> <p>Percentage of tourist activities publicised by the DMO that focus on special cultural heritage.</p> <p>Existence of risk management with regard to potential risks to tourists' safety and health.</p> <p>The DMO cooperates in initiatives that focus on employment equality and family-friendly working conditions.</p> <p>Number of public events related to important tourism projects in the destination.</p> <p>Existence of a system for surveying tourism acceptance among the local residents.</p> <p>Existence of contracts or agreements with volunteer organisations and sustainable development initiatives.</p> <p>Existence of social, ecological or cultural projects in the destination that integrate DMO contributions.</p> <p>Existence of a regular employee survey; frequency of this survey.</p> <p>Existence of measures to increase the attractiveness of employment that exceed the minimum legal requirements.</p>
	<p>Indicators</p> <p>K1 </p> <p>K12 </p> <p>GL1 </p> <p>GL2 </p> <p>GL3 </p> <p>GL4 </p> <p>GL5 </p>



Resulting guidelines

On the basis of the work of the research project, guidelines were drawn up, which translate the criteria into practical recommendations for the development of sustainable tourism in destinations. The recommendations are supported by practical implementation tools, best practice examples and a variety of other information. These guidelines support destination managers in putting the criteria into practice and initiating and optimising sustainable development processes. Furthermore,

the guidelines make it clear that many of the measures included are already part of the everyday work of professional destination management organisations. The concentration on sustainability focuses these measures on viable, high-quality tourism.

To date, the guidelines are only available in German. They can be downloaded here: www.bte-tourismus.de/projekte/details/181
www.bte-tourismus.de/english/topics/sustainable-tourism

Outlook

These criteria and the accompanying guidelines give concrete guidance to German tourism destinations who want to evaluate/locate themselves in the context of sustainable tourism for the first time. This bridges a significant gap between theoretical academic reports and implementation at the practical level. A scientifically sound and extensive participatory process led to the creation of relevant and practical fields of action for the sustainable development of tourism destinations.

The criteria are intended to promote the implementation of sustainable development action at the destination level for Germany. Moreover, they can also serve at the international level as a framework for the implementation of sustainable tourism.

The criteria can be applied especially to the following current sustainability efforts:

- Policy guidelines and tourism policy action plans can include the content in their framework pro-

grammes and use them as guidelines for the sustainable development of tourism at the destination level.

- Tourism-related sustainable development systems and certification procedures for destinations can use aspects of the criteria in their development or revision phases and thus contribute to the further harmonisation of requirements.
- As part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the criteria can provide important implementation tools for the contribution of tourism to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national level. The criteria provide a particularly significant boost for Goal 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, productive employment and decent work for all) and Goal 12 (ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns).

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