SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD FOR THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR.

FEBRUARY, 2023
FOREWORD

Sustainability is currently a major pursuit in many industries, including the hospitality industry, where it is a vital issue for industry development. However, the rapid growth of the hotel industry contributes significantly to environmental degradation worldwide, as hotels consume a large amount of energy and water for heating, cooling and lighting, which negatively influences the environment, some hotels have implemented environmental policies to specifically promote environmental preservation in the hope of improving the quality of human lives.

The growing interest in the principles of sustainable development, and the resulting pressure from the media, government and consumer sources to increase activity levels in this area, is forcing many hotels to increasingly implement practices that are more environmentally friendly. The hotel guests are also more knowledgeable than they were in the past and this results to a need for the hospitality service providers to adopt sustainable practices.

This Standard aims at guiding hospitality establishments on the possible strategies they would adopt.

REVISION OF THE STANDARD

In order to keep abreast of progress in the sector, TRA Standards shall be regularly reviewed at least every 3 years. Suggestions for improvements to published standards, addressed to the Director General, Tourism Regulatory Authority, are welcome.
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PART I: PRELIMINARY

1. Short Title
This Standard may be cited as the Tourism Regulatory Authority *Sustainability Standard for The Hospitality Sector*.

2. Scope
This Standard prescribes the guidelines to ensure that the hospitality enterprises’ (Class A&B as listed under schedule nine of the Tourism Act 2011) approach to business addresses the three pillars of sustainability (Environmental, social-cultural and economic).

3. Purpose
To harmonize the varying operations and practices of various hospitality establishments so as to enhance the promotion of responsible tourism practices to improve the quality of products and service provision within the sector.

4. Nominal references
In developing this standard, reference was made to the following Laws AND Guidelines:
   a) The Tourism Act, 2011
   b) Environmental Management and Coordination Act, 2012 and its Regulations
   c) Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, 2013
   d) Green Key Certification
   e) Ecotourism Kenya Certification Standard
   f) Global Sustainable Tourism Council Criteria
   g) EU Guidebook On Sustainable Tourism for Development
   h) Making Tourism More Sustainable-A guide for policy makers, 2005
i) Weights and Measure Act, 2002
j) Energy and Petroleum Regulations, 2002; Renewable energy
k) Sustainable Waste Management Act, 2022
l) Occupational Safety Health Act, 2007
m) WIBA 2007, revised 2012
n) Air Quality Regulations, 2014

5. **Definition of Terms.**

**Conservation** means the management of human use of organisms or ecosystems to ensure that such used is sustainable.

**Discrimination** means unequal treatment of persons on grounds which are not justifiable in law.

**Ecosystem** means a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.

**Emissions** means the discharge of pollutants into the atmosphere from stationary sources such as smoke stacks, other vents, surface areas of commercial or industrial facilities and mobile sources, for example, motor vehicles, locomotives and aircraft.

**Employee** means individual in a relationship recognized as an “employment relationship” in national law or practice.

**Greenhouse** means atmospheric gases that contribute to the greenhouse effect and sustain life on earth.

**Green Building Designs** means putting up structures and the using of processes that are environmentally responsible and resource-efficient throughout a building’s life-cycle.

**Hazardous waste** means a substance or item that poses a threat to biological health and the environment.
Local means the area immediately around the site of business operations and canary depending on the density of the location

Local community means people living in the immediate area potentially affected socially, economically, or environmentally by a tourism project

Pollution means the presence of substances and heat in environmental media whose nature, location, or quantity produces undesirable environmental effects

Sustainability means use of resources, in an environmentally responsible, socially fair and economically viable manner, so that by meeting current usage needs, the possibility of its use by future generations is not compromised.

Sustainability management system means well-documented processes and practices that are helps the establishment to reduce its sustainability impact and increase its operating efficiency.
PART II: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

6. Legal requirements

Principle: Compliance to legal requirements and any other relevant applicable laws as a fundamental precondition of any legal hospitality business and a necessary reputation and risk management practice.

Criteria: Be in compliance with all applicable county and national legislation and regulations.

Indicator: The establishment shall:

a) Provide proof that they are legally registered in accordance with applicable requirements, and shall have approved records of registration.

b) Have in place a mechanism for ensuring compliance with legal or regulatory requirements.

c) Stipulate procedures for familiarizing and updating staff on applicable laws and regulatory requirements.

7. Sustainability Management System

Principle: well-documented sustainability processes and practices that are monitored and holistic as a fundamental precondition for demonstration of a strategic sustainable management.

Criteria: The hospitality establishment shall adopt sustainable management practices.

Indicators: The hospitality establishment shall implement a long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its size and scope,
addresses environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health, safety, risk and crisis management issues and drives continuous improvement.

8. Reporting, Communication, and Information interpretation

**Principle:** Timely, Accurate, transparent, and auditable information as a fundamental precondition for a credible and integral hospitality business and essential for hospitality business and its stakeholders to understand progress on sustainability targets and an enabler for consumers and suppliers to exercise effective choice.

**Criteria:** The hospitality operator shall adopt reliable forms of information.

**Indicators:** The establishment shall:

a) Have a mechanism to actively monitor the impacts of sustainability.

b) Have regular reporting mechanisms that reflect the three pillars of sustainability. The reports should be easily accessible to internal and external stakeholders.

c) Gather information from all stakeholders including suppliers and staff.

d) Conduct sensitization of staff on environmental sustainability

9. Promotion and Customer Experience

**Principle:** Accurate and transparent promotion information as a fundamental precondition for responsible marketing and a system for monitoring and evaluating customer satisfaction against what was promised as a prerequisite for enhancing customer experiences.

**Criteria:** The hospitality establishment shall provide quality customer experience.

**Indicators:** the establishment shall;
a) Have promotional materials and marketing communications that are accurate and transparent with regard to the organization and its products and services, including sustainability claims. They shall not promise more than they can deliver.

b) Communicate its sustainability policy, actions and performance to stakeholders, including customers, and seek to engage their support.

c) Keep its procedures, decisions and partnerships open and transparent.

d) Educate guests with films, documentaries and lectures about conservation efforts, systems to deal with customers indicating their service offers, feedback mechanisms and raise consumer awareness regarding sustainability.

10. Staff Engagement

**Principle:** Inclusive and participatory engagement of staff in development of sustainability policy and management practices as a fundamental precondition for implementation of a sustainability management system.

**Criteria:**

The hospitality industry shall make Commitments/engagements by empowering staff to minimize environmental impacts. This is through generating staff awareness in sustainability best practices at all levels, and encouraging participation and feedback.

**Indicators:** The establishment shall:

a) Have an environmental sustainability policy in place.

b) Have an environmental sustainability committee in place.

c) Provide staff with periodic guidance and training regarding their roles and responsibilities in sustainability management systems delivery.

d) Have a system in place for staff to give feedback.
e) Have incubation of appropriate innovations & Technologies and linkages with investors and green tourism initiatives.
f) Have recognition of environmental champions

PART III: ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

The tourism sector will focus on sustainability as a key driver in all its activities. The sector is committed to improving the environmental performance of indoors outside based activities, and to be leaders in best practice in environmental management. This will constitute a key component of commitment to demonstrate good environmental practice in tourism operations and ensure that people are living sustainably within their natural and built-up environments. The above will be achieved by each facility through ensuring they comply with all relevant Government environmental management policy, legislation, regulations and practices.

11. Building and Infrastructure

Principle: Strategically designed as examples of eco-friendly buildings, with minimal carbon emissions. This have been leveraged on aspects such as low energy consumption, water harvesting, use of local materials, proper waste management and cost-effective hospitality business.

Criteria: Compliance with laws relating to land use and activities in the local area taking into account the carrying capacity and integrity of the natural and cultural surroundings.

Indicator: The hospitality establishment shall

a) Provide access and information for persons with disability.
b) Acquire land, property and water user rights through a process that is legal, complies with local communal and indigenous rights, including their free, prior and informed consent, and does not require involuntary resettlement.

c) Comply with green building design principles.

d) Have a design that responds to local conditions and is culturally acceptable, putting into consideration creative architecture.

e) Use local materials/contractors/resources to support local economic/business growth.

f) Ensure compliance with EIA/EA regulation 2006 (acknowledgement/licenses).

12. **Energy requirements**

**Principle:** Energy efficiency, rational consumption, and clean energy use as a fundamental precondition for a responsible hospitality business and a necessary sustainability practice.

**Criteria:** The hospitality operator has put in place measures aimed at sound energy management including energy conservation, utilization of renewable energy and reduction of dependency on non-renewable sources.

**Indicators:** The establishment shall have

a) Measures in place to comply with the requirements of the existing Energy Act and subsidiary Regulations including The Air Quality Regulations 2014 where applicable

b) An energy management plan and policy providing guidelines on energy efficiency and conservation.

c) Renewable energy strategies and evidence of implementation.

d) Electronic equipment used at the facility (front office, laundry, housekeeping, offices, kitchen etc.) shall have energy-saving efficiency.

e) Lighting devices shall have energy-saving efficiency.
f) Devices that automatically switch into energy saving mode when not in use.
g) The lights in all rooms in the establishment shall be switched off when not in use.
h) Natural ventilation preferred to regulate temperatures, where applicable.
i) Sensitize and/or train staff and guest to ensure competence in energy efficiency and conservation measures.
j) Regular maintenance and cleaning of electrical equipment shall be carried out and records kept.
k) All equipment with gauges shall be calibrated upon installation and re-calibrated where applicable.
l) Boilers and solar water heating shall have insulation.

13. Water Usage requirements

Principle: Water efficiency and rational consumption of water as fundamental precondition for legal and responsible hospitality business and a necessary sustainability practice.

Criteria: Adopt best water conservation measures through water recycling, reuse and conservation.

Indicator: The establishment shall

a) Develop and implement a water management policy and plan
b) Conduct regular water audits including monitoring and managing water usage per tourist/night per source
c) Promote staff and guest awareness and participation in water conservation
d) Implement water conservation and reuse programs including grey water treatment and reuse systems
e) Regularly train staff on water conservation best practices.
f) Reduce water usage through efficient appliances and technologies
g) Reduce water waste through regular maintenance of water supply systems
h) Determine water stewardship goals where water insecurity is high

a) Evidence effluent discharge license and Quarterly effluent analysis reports

b) Evidence of water recycling, reuse and conservation measures (A mechanism to reduce water consumption and measure water use. Install water savers in showers and taps and have water irrigation systems that uses rainwater and greywater to water the garden and plants)

c) Construct, connect or operate a Sewerage treatment facility. Evidence of payment for sewer connections

d) Install a septic, soak, pit and other sanitary methods of effluent control. Effluent discharge license issued by NEMA

14. Solid Waste Management requirements

Principle: Elimination of solid waste and solid waste resource recovery as fundamental precondition for a legal and environmentally conscious hotel business and a necessary sustainability practice

Criteria: Responsible management of waste and contaminants that affect the environment and human health through provision by ensuring compliance.

Indicator: The establishment shall have:

a) A waste management policy and plan following the principles of circularity and a waste management hierarchy Refuse, Reduce, Re-use, Repurpose, Recycle and Rot (6Rs).

b) Evidence of Waste Reduction, reuse and recycling initiatives

c) A system that carefully manages the purchasing of consumable and disposable goods, including food, in order to minimize waste.

d) Evidence of contracted NEMA licensed waste handler or facility waste.

e) Waste separated as paper, cardboard, organic waste, glass and soft plastic.
f) Hazardous waste like batteries and light bulbs collected in separate containers and brought to an appropriate collection point.

h) Use of harmful substances, including pesticides, paints, swimming pool disinfectants, and cleaning materials, minimized, and substituted when available by innocuous products or processes. All storage, use, handling, and disposal of chemicals shall be properly managed.

i) Furniture, devices and other materials that are no longer needed but are still usable donated to charities or staff.

j) Computers that are no longer usable returned to the IT provider so that the components can be reused on other computers.

k) Materials that are no longer usable, disposed of at an appropriate recycling facility.

l) The amount of packaging waste reduced and products purchased in bulk when possible. This includes food and beverage items such as coffee, tea, milk, sugar, etc., as well as cleaning products and toiletries.

m) Cotton hand towels that are washed after every use instead of paper towels for drying hands after washing.

n) A policy on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and ozone depleting substances from all sources within the operations of a hospitality enterprise.

o) Mechanisms in place to identify, monitor and record sources, types and amount of Ozone Depleting Substances from its operations.

p) Procedures (SOPs) in place and implemented regarding safe handling and disposal of chemicals and harmful substances.

q) Implementation practices to minimize pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting substances, and air, water and soil contaminants.

r) A report on changes in waste generated year-on-year

s) Waste cooking oil shall be recycled.
15. **Wastewater Management requirements**

The purpose of managing waste water from the facility apply requirement of provision of water quality regulation is to enhance protection of human health and the environment from negative impact of pollution from effluent discharge. This can be effectively achieved through application of the water quality regulations thus will show marked reduction of water-borne diseases.

**Principle:** Treatment and minimization of wastewater and wastewater resource recovery as fundamental precondition for a legal and environmentally conscious hotel business and a necessary sustainability practice

**Criteria** It’s wastewater, including grey water, effectively treated and only reused or safely released, with no adverse effects to the local population or the environment

**Indicators:** The hospitality establishment shall

a) Develop a wastewater management policy and plan
b) Minimize wastewater generation through efficient use of water
c) Implement a wastewater treatment system suitable for place of operation
d) Conduct regular audits to assess wastewater management practices
e) Train staff on the proper reuse where applicable and handling of wastewater
f) Regularly monitor and maintain wastewater management and treatment systems
g) Dispose of wastewater to a municipal or government approved treatment system, or have an on-site system in place to treat wastewater
h) Ensure that the disposal of wastewater/effluents meets local/national/international quality requirements
i) The hospitality establishment shall have records on waste water treatment.
j) Records on waste water treatment.
16. **Air pollution management**

**Principle:** Air pollution control as a fundamental precondition for a legal and environmentally conscious hotel business and a necessary sustainability practice.

**Criteria:** Air pollution sources shall be controlled to ensure clean, healthy and ambient air.

**Indicator:** The establishment shall

a) Have maintenance and servicing schedules.
b) Have emission testing for mobile sources
c) Ensure training, conduct indoor air quality survey, stack emission, have an emission license and emission interventions and assessment report on boundary ambient air quality.
d) Identify and regularly monitor potential sources of air pollution
e) Implement energy efficiency programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
f) Implement sustainable procurement policies to reduce to air polluting products and use ecofriendly alternatives

17. **Biodiversity Conservation requirement**

**Principle:** Biodiversity conservation and environmental protection management systems as a fundamental precondition for a legal and environmentally conscious hotel business and a necessary sustainability practice.

**Criteria:** Utilization of wildlife shall be permitted in line with the Laws and Regulations for sustainability.

**Indicator:** The establishment shall
a) Ensure compliance to the conservation of biological diversity and benefit sharing regulations.
b) Evidence of benefit sharing on utilization of biological and genetic resources which includes Biodiversity conservation and CSR initiatives.
c) Compliance to Wetlands, River banks, lakeshores, and seashore management regulations, 2009
d) Adopt measures to avoid the introduction of invasive species and use of native species for landscaping and restoration wherever feasible, particularly in natural landscapes.
e) Permit interactions with free roaming wildlife, taking into account cumulative impacts, are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse effects on the animals concerned and on the viability and behavior of populations in the wild.
f) Not acquire wildlife species, breed or hold captive, except by authorized and suitably equipped persons and for properly regulated activities in compliance with local and international law.
g) House, care and handle all wild and domestic animals guaranteeing the highest standards of animal welfare.
h) Not harvest wildlife species, consume, display, sell, or trade, except as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilization is sustainable, and in compliance with local and international laws.

PART IV: SOCIAL REQUIREMENTS

18. Social-cultural and social-economic responsibility requirements

Principle: Respect, Inclusivity, Equity and Access for all especially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups as a fundamental precondition for a legal hospitality business and necessary human rights practice.
Policies governing labor, health, safety and human rights policies that strive within the legal requirements for an inclusive decent work environment.

**Criteria** The hospitality operator could take advantage of partnerships to profile themselves as a way of giving back to the community through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by undertaking environmental projects/activities through partnership with stakeholders.

**Indicator:** The establishment shall

a) Delegate a percentage of income for individuals, families or whole communities directly or indirectly through employment, private businesses, taxes, charges and investments.

b) Show proof of MOUs, Joint work plans and budgets of support for community based tourism enterprises and community projects that will enable the local community to generate a monetary income to improve their living conditions.

c) Have at least 50% of local families generate an income from tourism business in the enterprise.

d) Ensure labor rights are respected, a safe and secure working environment is provided and employees are paid at least a living wage.

e) Ensure its activities and those of its subcontractors do not jeopardize the provision of basic services, such as food, water, energy, healthcare or sanitation, to the neighboring communities.

f) Give local residents equal opportunities for employment and advancement, including in management positions.

g) Give priority to local and fair trade suppliers whenever these are available and are of sufficient quality.

h) Avoid discrimination based on age, disability, gender, origin, political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or any other personal characteristics.
i) Condemn anti-corruption and outline its financial standing orders and regulations.

j) Condemn exploitation of children and adolescents, all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation as well as human trafficking and modern day slavery of any kind.

k) Recognize that all staff have a responsibility to assist the unit dealing with environmental sustainability in meeting its commitments, empowering staff to minimize environmental impacts through generating staff awareness, and encouraging participation and feedback.

l) Respect the privacy of its staff, partners and clients and comply with the General Data Protection Regulation.

m) Ensure all activities are legitimate and do not negatively affect the communities where these activities are carried out.

n) Seek partnerships with other social and environmental charities on monitoring and inspections in their work and seeks opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.

o) Ensure compliance with environment legislation.

p) Support other social and environmental charities in their work and seeks opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.

q) Empower communities to take action to improve their environment, especially in areas that have been polluted and over-exploited.

r) Have cultural standards and traditions taken into consideration when making food and beverage decisions.

s) Recognize environmental champions and provide evidence of appreciation of environmental sustainability champions.

T) Participate in environmental events with communities and schools like support initiatives for local infrastructure and social community development.

u) Have organization values and incorporate authentic elements of traditional and contemporary local culture in its operations, design, decoration,
cuisine, or shops, while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.

PART V: ECONOMIC REQUIREMENTS

19. Labor Requirements

Principle: Inclusivity in recruitment, Equitable Wages, Safe Working Conditions and respect for labor and children rights as a fundamental precondition for a legal hospitality business and a necessary human and labor rights practice.

Criteria: The hospitality establishment shall provide safe working conditions at all times.

Indicators: The establishment shall

a) Develop and implement a policy against exploitation and harassment of vulnerable groups especially children, people living with disabilities, women, and poor groups.

b) Prioritize local community employment, including training opportunities and internal promotion.

c) Practice and show proof of equitable and just compensation and benefits for all employees

d) Monitor and document evidence of proactive action against all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment at the workplace including implementing a system for employee feedback and involvement.

e) Provide and show proof of training and development opportunities for employees.

f) Regularly evaluate and improve sustainable human resource management practices and ensure compliance with regulations and human rights requirements.

g) Provide a safe, inclusive and decent working and/or living environment (where applicable) for all staff taking into consideration the needs of women and religion.
20. **Health, Safety and Security**

**Principle**

Tourism Operations shall ensure safety and security in all operations.

**Criteria**

The Tourism Operators shall ensure efficient risk assessment to identify the likelihood of risks related to the operations.

**Indicators**

Tourism operators shall:

- a) Ensure the wellbeing of visitors in the destination.
- b) Have policies to address crime.
- c) Have policies on safety and hygiene standards.
- d) Have Occupational health and safety rules for their businesses.
- e) Ensure elimination of any types of exploitation of anyone and to any vulnerable populations particularly commercial sexual workers, youth, women and minority groups.
- f) Keep Records of safety operation review and measures taken to ensure the comfort, wellbeing of guests, employees and the surrounding community.
- g) Show evidence of identification and application of remedial action to minimize the occurrence of immediate risk.
- h) Ensure the security of the Tourism Operation and to be reviewed constantly.
- i) Ensure appropriate measures are taken to cater for the wellbeing of guests, employees and surrounding communities.
- j) Put in place, a programme with the ultimate goal of identifying, minimizing and eliminating security risks.
- k) Have a documented detailed rapid security policy and response strategy.
- l) Have an emergency rescue and personal safety measures.
m) Make available a documented evidence of sensitization and security drills to employees.

n) Make a Report and record all security incidents to management and relevant authorities.

o) Have a program to ensure the safety needs of both visitors and residents by developing systems that monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to any crime, safety and health hazards.

21. **Supply Chain Requirement**

**Principle:** Fair business practices and green/sustainable supply chain management as a fundamental precondition for a legal, risk averse, socially and environmentally responsible hospitality business.

**Criteria:** The hospitality establishment shall engage in fair business practices.

**Indicators:** The establishment shall:

a) Develop a comprehensive sustainable procurement policy that prioritizes environmental responsibility and sustainability in purchasing practices.

b) Evaluate and prioritize the proportion of goods and services purchased from locally owned and operated businesses to support local economies and reduce carbon emissions.

c) Maintain open communication and transparency with suppliers to encourage their adoption of sustainable practices.

d) Regularly evaluate and monitor supplier performance to ensure they align with the business sustainability goals.

e) Perform regular audits of sources of supply of goods and services to ensure they are sustainable and ethical.

f) Continuously improve and update sustainable purchasing practices to minimize negative impacts on the environment and local communities.
22. **Risk Management and Crisis Response**

**Principle**
Risk management and crisis response preparedness

**Criteria**
The Tourism operators shall ensure efficient measures to identify likelihood of risk related to operation.

**Indicators**
Tourism operators and destination shall

a) Have in place a risk management policy that is communicated to all staff and guests.
b) Identify and mitigate risks.
c) Have Crisis response programs including communication protocols.
d) Have Risks training for stakeholders, including tourism businesses, locals and visitors.
e) Ensure Risk factors including climate change, natural phenomena, and visitor safety have been assessed and addressed.
f) Ensure efficient risk assessment to identify the likelihood of risks related to the operations.
g) Have documented procedures for the identification and categorization of risks related to operations.