Annex to the TourCert Certification Guideline

Implementing Rules for the Accommodation Certification

July 2022

1 Principles

1.1 **Scope of application:** The TourCert Implementing Rules for destinations are an applicable annex of the TourCert Certification Guideline and the TourCert Set of Criteria. They define the general conditions of the sustainability process and the certification and apply to all destinations.

1.2 **Deviations:** Deviations from the provisions defined in this document are only possible with the approval of the TourCert Certification Office.

1.3 **Accommodation**: Accommodation in the sense of TourCert is defined as those commercial enterprises with legal form which provide persons with overnight accommodation with or without meals.

2 Core Indicators

The core indicators of the destination are presented in the audit report and benchmarked against comparable destinations.

1. Return on sales
2. Turnover per available room
3. CO2 per night
4. Percentage of recycled paper
5. Residual waste per overnight stay
6. Water consumption per night
7. Satisfaction index guests
8. Employee satisfaction index
9. Proportion of sustainable products
10. Proportion of certified suppliers

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3 Data Collection

Accommodation providers seeking TourCert certification must meet basic requirements of data collection in order to apply for certification. Data assessment includes the indicators defined in the Set of Criteria for Accommodation. As a minimum requirement, it must contain the scope defined below.

Minimum Requirements for Data Collection

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">The creation of a mission statement, sustainability report and improvement programme are basic requirements for certification.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">The inventory shall include the criteria and indicators defined in the catalogue of criteria for accommodation. As a minimum requirement, it must meet the scope defined below.</td></tr>
<tr><td>- employee survey
- restaurant check
- supplier check
- CO2 balance for business trips</td><td>100%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">In the context of recertification, all data is collected again in full.</td></tr>
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4 Requirements for Certification

4.1 **Reporting Year:** The data collected must relate to the last closed financial year. The reference date is the date on which data collection started.

4.2 **Sustainability Manager:** To implement and maintain the TourCert certification system, sustainability managers are required to have a respective qualification. This rule also applies if there is a change in assignment and another person takes on the sustainability management. Changes of responsibilities for the management must be communicated to TourCert.

It must be ensured that the knowledge about the TourCert certification process remains within the accommodation. Interns are therefore not permitted as sustainability managers.

4.3 **Recognition of Compensation:** Flight compensations are 100% recognised if they are

a. use an RFI[1] of at least 2.7 for the emission calculation and

[1] RFI stands for Radiative Forcing Index or the global warming potential of certain emission sources. This factor is used to calculate the total climate impact of flight emissions. The CO2 emissions are multiplied by the RFI to measure not only CO_2 but also other climate-relevant gases.

b. the compensation project(s) is (are) CDM Gold Standard[2] certified (CER or VER).

If no RFI is used, or if another recognized voluntary standard is applied, compensation will not be recognized. Forest and afforestation projects are not recognised[3].

5 Deadlines and Periods

The TourCert certification promotes the continuous improvement of the certified accommodations´ sustainability performance. This requires the timely submission of relevant documents and information in order to be able to monitor improvement and development in a timely manner.

5.1 **Validity Period of the Certification**: Accommodations are considered certified as soon as the company has received a confirmation letter from the TourCert Certification Office. The certification period begins in the respective month.

After the initial certification the certification has a duration of two years (monthly period), after the recertifications a duration of three years (monthly period).

Every year (in the respective month) between (re)certifications, the certified destination must submit an updated improvement program to the TourCert Certification Office.

5.2 **Responsibility of Companies to Meet Deadlines:** Audit documents and updated improvement programs must be submitted to the TourCert Certification Office in time and unsolicited. It is the responsibility of the accommodation to meet the relevant deadlines.

Need for technical support must be planned in time with the respective consulting body.

5.3 **Request for Extension of Deadlines:** If the deadlines for submission of the sustainability report or the updated improvement programs cannot be met for understandable reasons, the Certification Office must be informed in time and a request must be made for an extension of the relevant deadline.

The extension of deadlines will not change on the validity period of the certification. The date of the initial certification will always be the reference for future deadlines and periods.

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[2] The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) describes a mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol for offsetting greenhouse gas emissions not where they were emitted but in developing and emerging countries. The Gold Standard defines special quality requirements. A CDM Gold Standard is therefore a kind of quality label for compensation projects. The savings achieved by compensation projects are labelled as CERs (Certified Emission Reduction) if they have been verified by the UN climate protection agency and they are VERs (Verified Emission Reduction) if they have been verified by an authority other than the UN.

[3] More information: https://www.atmosfair.de/en/standards/forest_projects/

5.4 **Failure to Comply with Deadlines:** Failure to comply with deadlines for the submission of the sustainability report or updated improvement program and failure to apply for an extension may result in the withdrawal of the TourCert label.

The sustainability report for recertification as well as the updated improvement program must not be submitted later than three months after the deadline.

6 Rules for Certification

6.1 **Audit**: Audits take place on site in the accommodation.

6.2 **Recommendations:** The auditor´s recommendations in the audit report should be included as measures in the improvement program. If individual recommendations cannot be implemented, this must be justified.

6.3 **Conditions:** Once the audit has been carried out, the auditor or the Certification Council can impose conditions, which may be either

- prerequisites for the current (re-)certification are or
- must be implemented in the coming certification period.

The following aspects may be part of obligations if the assessor or the Certification Council considers certain criteria not or not sufficiently fulfilled:

- Necessary documents such as annual financial statements, P&L, customer questionnaires, compensation documents, etc. are not available at the time of the assessment and must be submitted subsequently.
- The principles of CSR reporting (truth, materiality, clarity, comparability, verifiability) are not sufficiently met; the sustainability report must be revised formally or in terms of content.
- Significant weaknesses have not been identified or no measures have been formulated in the improvement programme for significant weaknesses identified. The improvement programme must be expanded.
- The objectives and measures formulated in the improvement programme are insufficiently specified and do not permit effective monitoring (responsibilities, deadlines, indicators).
- Essential recommendations made by the evaluator must be incorporated directly into the improvement programme as a measure.

The deadline for the fulfilment of requirements is at the discretion of the assessor or the Certification Council.

6.4 **Use of the Label**: After successful certification, companies may advertise with the TourCert seal and the commitment of the company must be communicated externally. The following guidelines therefore apply to the use of the seal:

- The label must be placed prominently on the company`s website and linked to the TourCert website.
- The TourCert label may only be published in the formats published by TourCert and only in the colours red or black.
- At least the label is placed on publications of the accommodation.
- TourCert is a company and destination certification, not a product certification. References to the certification may only refer to the company, not to the products and services offered.

If the certification is not renewed, the accommodation must remove all references to the certification from their own media and publications.

6.5 **External Communication After Successful Initial Certification:** Certified accommodation must place at least the following aspects on their corporate website:

- Mission statement
- Values for the ten core indicators (for SMEs with fewer than 250 employees, this can be waived for the "Return on sales", "Customer satisfaction index" and "Employee satisfaction index" indicators.)
- Improvement programme (goals and measures)

The TourCert certification must be explained at a suitable place. Further information and templates can be found in the TourCert Toolbox. The company receives the access data with the certificate.

6.6 **Suspension of Certification:** If a destination is not interested in recertification or if the resources necessary for recertification are not available to the destination, the certification ends at the end of the certification period.

When the process is restarted and the assessment is carried out again, the companies are assessed according to the main areas of the recertification audit (see Certification Guideline).

6.7 **Re-application for Initial Certification:** If a destination is not recommended for certification by the auditor or if the Certification Council rejects a certification, the destination can apply for a new audit.

At least three months must lay between the first and second audit. A new data collection is not necessarily required. Which reporting year will be audited will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the auditor or the Certification Office.

6.8 **Re-application for Recertification:** If a company is not recommended for recertification by the auditor; if the Certification Council rejects recertification; if a destination loses the TourCert label due to non-compliance with deadlines or in circumstances that do not allow an audit; then the destination has the opportunity to be audited within six months without re-collection of data.

After six months, data collection must be renewed, and the renewed participation in the introduction is recommended.

When the process is restarted and the assessment is carried out again, the companies are assessed according to the main areas of the recertification audit (see Certification Guideline).