

Ecotourism Certification System

“Eco-Romania”



SET OF CRITERIA

Certification criteria

This set of criteria is the result of a wide consultation process amongst AER members (tour-operators, tourism experts and NGOs) with representatives of the Environment and Water Management Ministry, the National Tourism Authority, the Tourism Research and Development Institute, the National Forest Administration, the National Park Administration and the University of Bucharest. It brings together in a meaningful way the international experience of certification programmes in the field, such as *NEAP – Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program*, a system developed by the Association of Ecotourism from Australia and *Nature’s Best*, a programme of the Association of Ecotourism from Sweden. Moreover, this set of criteria, while in a development phase, was presented at the international seminar „*Eco-Route to Sustainable Rural Development through Ecotourism Labeling*” – Malmo, Sweden, which took place in September 2005.

The criteria were developed according to the eight ecotourism principles identified in the Australian certification programme *NEAP* and adapted to the needs of tourism and nature conservation in Romania.

In the tables that follow, the certification criteria are structured according to the ecotourism principles and the operators to whom they are addressed.

A. PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT FOR COMPANIES

1. THE PRINCIPLE OF SHOWING SUSTAINABLE AND EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF COMPANIES / FIRMS

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1.1. The company/firm is implementing a sustainable management system adapted to the real situation and taking into account the socio-cultural aspects, quality, health, work and environment safety.				
2 Com puls ory	a. The company has got a sustainable management ¹ plan of the tourism operations of the firm, which includes: a. vision and objectives; b. an action plan containing a set of simple measures that are applicable and precise from the following points of view: socio-cultural character, health, work safety, environment, quality	A	T	
1	b. The action plan has been translated into a European language and communicated to tourists. <i>Note: Communication via the website of the company, via the materials that the tourist receives, or by displaying the main ideas in a visible place.</i>	A	T	
1.2. The company complies with relevant national and international legislation (tourism, environment, health and work safety)				
2	a. The operator is registered as an economic entity according to Romanian legislation or its equivalent in another European country.	A	T	
2	b. The company complies with the relevant national and international legislation in the field of health, work safety and environment.	A	T	
1.3. The personnel are permanently trained regarding the following aspects: socio-cultural characteristics, health, work safety and the environment.				
2	a. The operator organises periodical training (at least once a year) to inform the personnel about the sustainable management plan and the application of the action plan to the daily activities.	A	T	
1	b. The operator draws up and distributes to their personnel a handbook of sustainable management of the tourist operations.	A	T	

B. PRINCIPLES FOCUSED ON PRODUCT

1. NATURAL AREA FOCUS

¹ Model de plan de management durabil în anexa nr. 1

One of the principles of ecotourism is that of directing tourists towards natural areas. Ecotourism focuses on the tourists' direct and personal experience in nature. It occurs in nature and relies on the use of natural environment, that is on the geo-morphological, biological, physical and cultural features. In this way, tourists will benefit from a closer encounter with natural and spiritual values. The focus on the natural area is therefore essential to the planning, development and management of ecotourism.

1.1 Evaluation criteria based on the principle of the tourists' direct and personal experience in nature.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2 Compulsory	<p>a. Over 50% of the active time of the programme occurs in nature. <i>Note: The active time of the programme is considered to be the real time spent during the programme (product) offered to tourists, between breakfast and dinner. The night programme is also included, where it is the case.</i></p>		T	D
1	<p>b. The operation is based on activities that help the tourist to personally experience nature, providing the opportunity to use at least three senses (observation of natural features, bird listening, smelling, tasting wild berries, touching the tree bark, etc). <i>Note: The criterion takes into account the focussing of senses on nature observation and not the usual usage of the human senses. Besides sight and hearing, it is recommended that the operation includes an activity that emphasises the other senses too.</i></p>		T	D
2	<p>c. The operation offers a large range of recreational opportunities that are also found in the visitor management plan; the plan has to include all categories of tourists visiting the destination.</p>			D
1	<p>d. Accommodation is within or adjacent to a natural area. If in an urban area, the applicant shall explain, in the self-evaluation form, how the operation is focused on nature. <i>Note: The relationship between accommodation and the adjacent area is important, as well as the position of the accommodation in relation to nature.</i></p>	A	T	
2 Compulsory	<p>e. Over 50% of marketing images for the operation incorporate nature as a feature or background. <i>Note: The marketing images refer to site, photos, drawings etc.</i></p>	A	T	D

2. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE ECOTOURISM OPERATION

Another ecotourism principle is that of interpretation of the ecotourism operation. Interpretation represents the means by which the operator offers to tourists and local

communities information and experiences connected to the potential of the area, its natural and cultural values, leading to a widening of their level of knowledge and appreciation.

Interpretation can be of two types:

a. Personal interpretation

- Informative interaction with a guide (including specialised activities / tours such as bird watching, diving, wildlife tracking)
- Presentations delivered by specialists
- Drama / acting
- Other interpretation activities (games, treasure hunting, puppets, quizzes, role play, practical activities)

b. Non-personal interpretation

- Materials given out before the start of the programme (brochures, fact sheets, reading lists, websites)
- Signalling areas of interest
- Audio-visual (video, slides, CDs)
- Specialised materials (map collections, magazines and other specialised publications)
- Marked routes; themed and educational routes

2.1 Evaluation criteria regarding access to interpretation

In order to widen the level of knowledge and appreciation of the tourists and local communities it is necessary for the operation to offer, first of all, access to interpretation. This is why the certification programme has developed a set of criteria for measuring the level of access to interpretation of the ecotourism operation through different techniques.

Point s	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2 Com puls ory	<p>a. The tourists are given the opportunity to learn about the natural and cultural heritage of the environment they are visiting. The operator should provide at least three interpretation opportunities in the list above, of which at least one must be personal interpretation.</p> <p><i>Note: It may be necessary to prove the availability of the material / activities for those tourists who intend to participate (enough places for guided tours, proper number of interpretative brochures, well marked self-guiding paths, etc.).</i></p> <p><i>For Accommodation: two interpretative opportunities – without personal interpretation.</i></p>	A	T	D
2	<p>b. The operation offers the opportunity to spend the active time in the company of a specialised guide of specialised staff (i.e. botanist, ornithologist, forest operator, forest ranger, protected</p>			D

	area manager, etc.).			
1	c. Over 50% of the active time of the tourist programme is spent in the company of a specialised guide or specialised staff (i.e. botanist, ornithologist, forest operator, forest ranger, protected area manager, etc.).		T	
2 Com puls ory	d. The operation offers to the target group access to information on the area (at least one informational means: web page, telephone, interpretative brochures, newsletter, email) <i>Note: The target group represents the group of tourists to which the product is to be interpreted (children, teenagers, adults).</i>	A	T	D
1	e. Each accommodation has a system to explain and practically show the traditional food and the source of the food (underlining the local natural operations) <i>Note: Exemplifications can be made through menus, the chef's explanations, information given by the operator about the origin of the food etc.</i>	A		
1	f. Each accommodation shall provide at least one personal interpretation to promote the own image linked to ecotourism.	A		
1	g. At least 50% of the accommodation facilities used are ecotourism certified or compliant to the certification criteria.		T	
1	h. In case there are no ecotourism certified accommodation facilities, proof must be provided of a development plan for the ecotourism accommodation.			D

2.2 Evaluation criteria regarding the accuracy of information

One of the evaluation criteria refers to the accuracy of information presented to those who are interested.

Point s	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	The accuracy of the information provided to tourists is checked by reference to one of the following sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reference books or publications; • specialised personnel (botanists, ornitologists, forest operators, natural area managers, sociologists, anthropologists, etc.); • museums or zoos; • documentaries; • recognised bodies or interest groups; • recognised training courses/materials; • management plans. <i>Note: The information sources used by operators must be recognized as reliable sources (they must not contain inexact information which could lead to a false image of the area / site visited).</i>	A	T	D

2.3 Evaluation criteria regarding planning of the interpretation

As a means by which the operator offers tourists / local communities information about the potential of the area, its natural and cultural values, interpretation has been planned to meet specifically defined objectives.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>a. Interpretation is planned and designed to clearly show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the target group; • the objective; • themes or messages; • structure and logical sequence; • concept of ecotourism; • the importance of the area conservation. <p><i>Note: The target group represents the group of tourists to whom the product is to be interpreted (children, teenagers, adults). Interpretation will be adapted according to the level of the target group.</i></p>	A	T	D
1	<p>b. The inside design should reflect the ecotourism principles; (no hunting trophies or weapons, wild animal furs are displayed, etc.)</p>	A		
1	<p>c. The quality of the interpretation has been monitored in the past year through the tourist feedback (participation rate in the interpretative activities, comments, compliments or complaints).</p> <p><i>Note: The accommodation and tour operators, if new in this activity, must define how the monitoring is going to take place.</i></p>	A	T	D

2.4 Evaluation criteria regarding staff awareness and understanding

In order to transmit information to tourists, the guides and other key staff in contact with tourists must be able to provide accurate information about the principles of ecotourism as well as precise interpretation.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2 Compulsory	<p>a. All operational staff in contact with the ecotourists have a basic knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the natural and conservation values of the area; • the core principles of ecotourism and the way they are achieved through the programme; 	A	T	D

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the behaviour they should have as part of their duties that help decrease the impact of the operation (i.e. proper disposal of the cleaning materials, minimising water or energy consumption, etc.); adequate behaviour that they and the tourist must take to reduce the environmental impact (correct disposal of cigarettes butts, of waste, no collection of flora, fauna or other nature samples, no feeding wildlife, etc.); management of waste disposal. <p><i>Note: This criterion applies to all staff, whether or not they carry out interpretative activities, (i.e. receptionists, hostesses, bar staff, etc.) and can be proved by testing of staff through questionnaires.</i></p>			
1	b. Guides and all staff that deliver any form of interpretation are competent in providing information on the natural values of the area they present.	A	T	D
1	c. Guides and all staff that deliver any form of interpretation are competent in providing information on the conservation of the area they present.	A	T	D
1	d. Guides and all staff that deliver any form of interpretation have knowledge on the measures taken to ensure the ecological sustainability of the programme and are capable to explain it to the tourists.	A	T	D

2.5 Evaluation criteria regarding staff training

Guides and all other key staff (local guide, guide, mountain guide, biologist, geologist etc.) in contact with the customers are adequately trained in ecotourism and interpretation techniques, and provide accurate and reliable information.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>The operator has developed, adapted or taken a regular in-house training programme for staff with materials that cover core information on the visited area, the ecotourism principles and the behaviour of the staff in contact with the tourists.</p> <p><i>Note: This criterion applies to all staff, whether or not they carry out interpretative activities, (i.e. receptionists, hostesses, bar staff, etc.). The programme may contain information sheets, workshops, participation in the training courses organised by AER or any other institutions recognised by AER, training materials, etc.</i></p>	A	T	D

3. THE PRINCIPLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

All ecotourism activities should offer the best practices in tourism and planning from the point of view of the nature conservation and sustainable development. The tourism activity should be planned and managed to minimise the environmental impact.

3.1 Evaluation criteria regarding staff responsibility, knowledge and awareness

In order to make use of the best practices in the conservation of natural and cultural environment, all staff of the ecotourism operations should understand the environmental sustainability aspects of the operation related to their duties.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>All key staff in contact with tourists understand and apply the measures taken within the operation planning to ensure that it is ecologically sustainable.</p> <p><i>Note: The measures refer to: saving energy and fuel, the management of waste, saving resources, waste water management, etc.</i></p>	A	T	D

3.2. Evaluation criteria regarding environmental impact contingency planning

In order to minimize the environmental impact of the effects of some undesirable situations, all operators have considered the risks of their operations causing environmental harm.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>a. The environmental risks have been identified and measures have been taken in order to minimise or remove any risks.</p> <p><i>Note: The risks involve urgent situations which could affect the environment (waste spills, fire risks, etc.). The identification of risks caused by the operation is followed by the development of an action plan in order to avoid or reduce them.</i></p>	A	T	D
2 Compulsory	<p>b. A list with persons to be contacted in emergency cases includes: the Fire Brigade, the natural area management, the mountain rescue team.</p> <p><i>Note: In order to facilitate tourists' access to the list, it is recommended to be placed as follows: in key locations (in the case of Accommodation), at the Town Hall (in the case of Destinations) and in the first aid kit (in the case of Tour operators).</i></p>	A	T	D

3.3 Evaluation criteria regarding location

Good practice in sustainable tourism and nature conservation advises that operations are only undertaken in locations recommended for tourism where the impact is minimised.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2 Appl. / Non appl.	<p>a. Operations in protected areas are undertaken in locations designated by the management plan of the area or by the protected area manager as appropriate for this type of activity. <i>Note: For Destinations it is compulsory to have a set of rules regarding the activities allowed or forbidden in protected areas, if there is no approved management plan.</i> <i>For the other operators, if there is no management plan of PAs, and the PA manager has not designated a set of rules regarding the protection of the area and the activities forbidden in the area, the general rules established by the PA legislation will be followed.</i></p>	A	T	D
1	<p>b. The area used for tourism is identified in the approved territorial planning (General Urban Plan and Zoning Urban Plan), strategic plans, zoning plans, internal designation of the protected areas etc. as preferred or allowed.</p>			D
2 Appl. / Non appl.	<p>c. No venture off formed or designated/marked roads/trails is allowed unless approved by the manager of the natural area.</p>		T	D

3.4 Evaluation criteria regarding environmental planning and impact assessment

Good practice in ecotourism demands that the operator should take the necessary measures for the protection of the environment and evaluate the impact his activities have on the environment.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>Ecotourism activities have been established on the basis of the scientific understanding of the potential environmental impact and are carried out in compliance with the legal provisions regarding environmental protection.</p>	A		D

3.5 Evaluation criteria regarding site disturbance, landscaping and rehabilitation

The ecotourism operation involves minimal disturbance and the disturbed areas are rehabilitated to restore ecological processes.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>a. The development and use of the site has involved minimal clearing of the native vegetation and fauna. <i>Note: Facilities refer to buildings, household annexes, fences, utilities (gas, sewerage), parking, fixed or portable WCs etc. For Destinations the criterion applies both to public utility facilities, and to utilities included in the Accommodation type of products.</i></p>	A		D
1	<p>b. The development and use of the facilities involve a minimal disturbance to the local cultural heritage. <i>Note: For Destinations criterium the criterion applies both to public utility facilities, and to utilities included in the Accommodation type of products.</i></p>	A		D
1	<p>c. Landscaping of the site reflects the character of the surrounding natural environment or another natural system which is the focus of the operation. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies both to public utility facilities, and to utilities included in the Accommodation type of products.</i></p>	A		D
1	<p>d. Where clearing occurred, it has not affected the rare or threatened species of local flora and fauna. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies both to public utility facilities, and to all tourist products.</i></p>	A	T	D
1	<p>e. An inventory of the natural values in the area has been undertaken prior to the site disturbance and after the rehabilitation.</p>			D
1	<p>f. No residual pesticides or herbicides are used, and no genetically-modified plants are promoted and/or cultivated. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies for the entire area irrespective of the legal status of the cultivated land.</i></p>	A		D
1	<p>g. The tour operator has directly provided the infrastructure (toilets, boardwalks, etc.) in the area(s) visited within a protected area.</p>			D

3.6 Evaluation criteria regarding soil and water management

In order to preserve the environment and to develop sustainable tourism, the tour operators must ensure that when they landscape the sites where ecotourism activities take place, the site topography is followed and the ecotourist operation does not cause erosion, water, air or soil contamination, vegetation loss, etc.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>a. The tourist development (buildings, trails) does not result in irreversible changes: land reshaping, changes of the watercourses, total clearing, etc. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies both to public utility facilities, and to all tourist products.</i></p>	A		D
1	<p>b. No soil erosion occurs or, if there is erosion, measures for the consolidation and rehabilitation of the eroded areas are being taken.</p>	A		D
1	<p>c. Fences, hedges, barriers or appropriate signaling are used to keep traffic in well designated areas according to categories of users. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies both to public utility facilities, and products of the type Tour and/or Accommodation.</i></p>	A		D
2 Compulsory	<p>d. Disposal of the waste specific to the activities in the area is not allowed if there is any risk of water, air or soil pollution. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to the entire area irrespective of the legal status of the property.</i></p>	A	T	D

3.7 Evaluation criteria regarding building methods and materials

Lately ecological building materials have started to be used more extensively. It is recommended that ecotourism operators maximise the use of recycled or renewable materials and aim to introduce practices to minimise the environmental impact.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>a. Minimum three of the following measures have been taken to minimise the environmental impact during the building or refurbishment of the facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • works of excavation and any other disturbance to groundcover are minimised; • use of appropriate (traditional) building techniques within the heritage precincts); • use of locally sourced building materials (unless the local sources result in an impact increase); • use of recycled materials; • use of biodegradable materials; • use of renewable energy; • no residual pesticides are used; • use of materials that do not produce greenhouse gases. <p><i>Note: Facilities refer to buildings, household annexes, fences,</i></p>	A		D

	<i>utilities (gas, sewerage), parking, fixed or portable WCs etc.</i>			
1	<p>b. In the case of building works being developed or planned for the future, contractors and workers are informed on the natural and cultural values of the area and on the required measures for environmental protection.</p> <p><i>Note: The criterion applies only to those products that contain building works under development.</i></p> <p><i>For Destinations, the criterion applies to the improvement of the public utility facilities as well as to the Accommodation products offered by the Destination if they contain building work projects under development.</i></p>	A		D
1	<p>c. Measures of environmental management have been used in order to minimise the disturbance of the area during the development of the building.</p> <p><i>Note: The criterion applies only to those products that contain building works under development.</i></p> <p><i>For Destinations, the criterion applies to the improvement of the public utility facilities as well as to the Accommodation products offered by the Destination if they contain building work projects under development.</i></p>	A		D

3.8 Evaluation criteria regarding the visual impact

Reduced visual impact of the tourist facilities is another example of good practice in ecotourism. The main aim of the ecotourism activities is related, in general, to nature observation. This is why tourist facilities must allow, through their structure and form, this aim to be reached.

Point s	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>a. At least three of the following measures have been / will be taken to reduce the visual impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the design has considered the visual analysis – it has aimed to minimize the visual impact; • buildings' forms are compatible with the landscape; • buildings' forms are compatible with the local traditional architecture; • the height of buildings and structures are below the tree lines or screened by topographic features (hills); • roads are screened by vegetation or landscape elements or designed so that the visual impact be minimised (curved lines); • car parks are designed and landscaped to minimise the visual impacts or alternative solutions, other than asphalt, are considered; • the colour and reflectivity of the surfaces are compatible 	A		D

	<p>with the landscape;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> native vegetation has been maintained or included in the landscaping to screen facilities. <p><i>Note: The criterion also applies to projects under development. In this case the tour operator will demonstrate the inclusion of the measures in the building projects.</i></p> <p><i>For Destinations the whole architectural and urban ensemble of the area will be considered.</i></p>			
1	<p>b. Vehicles, vessels, structures used for the transport of tourists are painted in colours that minimise the visual impact.</p> <p><i>Note: It is recommended to avoid intense colours which have a strong negative visual impact (for example pink or orange).</i></p> <p><i>For Destinations the vehicles used for the transport of tourists, within all the tourist products offered by the destination, will be considered.</i></p>	A	T	D

3.9 Evaluation criteria regarding light

Another aim of sustainable tourism refers to raising awareness amongst the population regarding the use of natural resources instead of artificial ones. An example of good practice in ecotourism is the usage of mainly natural light. Where natural light is not appropriate, lighting has been minimised to the limit required for safety and visibility of signs and displays.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>At least three of the following measures have been taken to reduce illumination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> illuminated signage is only used for emergency exits; spotlights point below the horizontal; incandescent floodlights are not used in public places; compact fluorescent light bulbs are used wherever possible; natural light provides all necessary illumination to all areas of buildings in daytime. 	A		D

3.10 Evaluation criteria regarding water supply and conservation

Ecotourism involves conservation of natural resources. This is why the ecotourism operations should involve the economic use of water sources.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	a. The sustainability of the water source must be stated through an independent hydrological/hydrogeological assessment or by a governmental agency.			D
2 Compulsory	b. At least five of the following measures for water conservation should be implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tap aerators; • low flow showerheads; • controlled flow of toilet water; • showers only, instead of baths; • low water gardens (local native plants, drip water system); • rain water collection; • re-use of grey water; • limitation of the water consumption; • encouraging customers to use the towels several days; • written advice provided to tourists to minimise water consumption; • automatic turn-off taps. 	A		D

3.11 Evaluation criteria regarding wastewater

Another example of good practice in ecotourism: sewage and effluent is minimised and has no significant impact on the environment.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2 Compulsory	a. All tourism facilities should be connected to a drainage system or have a system of water collection, retention and treatment, or effluent is directed to a treatment plant. <i>Note: Facilities refer to buildings, household annexes, parking, toilets, bathrooms, sinks, etc., which use water and produce wastewater.</i>	A		D
1	b. The existence of a management system of wastewater already implemented or being implemented.			D

3.12 Evaluation criteria regarding noise

Ecotourism activities must offer tourists the opportunity to benefit from nature entirely, with all its characteristics, including auditive ones. This is why the level of noise caused by

the activities of the operators must be reduced in order to offer the tourists the opportunity to experience the nature sounds.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>a. Usual noise level from all activities on the site (including telephones, public address system, transports, concerts, music, equipment and machinery) does not significantly exceed the background noise in the area.</p>	A	T	D
1	<p>b. Sound insulation minimises the noise from plant equipment and machinery. <i>Note: For Tours, vehicles and other electrical / mechanical noise-generator equipment will be considered. For Destinations, the criterion applies to all accommodation facilities offered by them.</i></p>	A	T	D
1	<p>c. Vehicles are not left running idle for more than three minutes. <i>Note: The criterion applies only to operators who use vehicles for transport within the operation. For Destinations, the vehicles used for the transport of tourists within the tourism products offered by them will be considered.</i></p>	A	T	D
1	<p>d. Music sources (TV, radio sets) are only used in camping sites where other tourists are not disturbed. <i>Note: For Accommodation, the criterion applies only to camping type accommodation. For Destinations, the criterion applies to the recreation zones developed especially for tourists and / or to the camping type of accommodation facilities within the products offered by them.</i></p>	A	T	D
1	<p>e. Campsites have special areas for large groups. <i>Note: For Accommodation, the criterion applies only in the case of camping type of accommodation. Large groups are defined as containing more than 15 people.</i></p>	A		D
1	<p>f. Service and maintenance facilities are located away from the quiet areas or are provided with sound insulation. <i>Note: Quiet areas are those developed for recreation (for example bedrooms, parks, gardens, swimming pools, public baths).</i></p>	A		D
1	<p>g. Tourists have the opportunity to enjoy “the quietness of the nature”.</p>	A	T	D

3.13 Evaluation criteria regarding the air quality

One of the requirements of good practice in ecotourism is that the ecotourism operations involve minimal air pollution.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>a. Within the operation no vehicles are used for transportation if the air emission is obviously harmful for the environment. <i>Note: For Destinations, the vehicles used for the transport of tourists within the tourism products offered by them will be considered.</i></p>	A	T	D
1	<p>b. The release of solvents (dry cleaning solvents, thinners) and hydrocarbon (essence, diesel) in the air is minimal. <i>Note: Ecological products are recommended. For Destinations, the criterion applies both to the tourism products offered by the destination and to all administrative activities which involve using solvents or have hydrocarbon emissions.</i></p>	A	T	D
1	<p>c. No offensive odours are associated with air emissions. <i>Note: The criterion applies to the absence of polluting emissions whose presence can be easily detected through the appearance of some specific odours. For Destinations, the criterion applies to all activities within the destination.</i></p>	A	T	D
1	<p>d. Waste incineration is controlled and does not produce a visible perturbation of the air. <i>Note: The criterion applies even though for waste disposal a different type of ecological method is used. For Destinations the criterion applies both to public areas and to all the products developed by destinations.</i></p>	A	T	D

3.14 Evaluation criteria regarding minimisation of waste and litter

Another example of good practice in ecotourism is that the ecotourism operations involve minimal waste.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2 Compulsory	<p>a. At least five of the following measures have been taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • materials are purchased to minimise packaging; • biodegradable materials are used; • only reusable or recyclable containers are displayed (for example glasses); • disposable items are not used (utensiles and containers) except under special circumstances and no often than once/person/stay; • both staff and customers are encouraged to take part in the programmes for collecting, recycling and minimisation of the waste; • the tourism facilities are included in a programme for waste recycling; 	A	T	D

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all litter found is collected and removed; • a system for composting the organic kitchen waste is in place; • clean-up days are organised or supported (finance, labour, transport, refreshments etc.) (at least once a year) <p><i>Note: Facilities include buildings, household annexes, parking, toilets, bathrooms, sinks, etc.</i></p>			
1	b. A system for the management of waste is in place, including the ecological disposal.			D

3.15 Evaluation criteria regarding energy use and consumption: buildings

Ecotourism activities involve minimum energy consumption. In the case of buildings, energy consumption can be reduced by taking specific measures to isolate them or by using minimum energy consumption equipment.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>a. Roof insulation and, in cold areas, wall insulation.</p> <p><i>Note: Insulation is made of, as much as possible, ecological materials.</i></p>	A		
2 Compulsory	<p>b. Minimum five of the following measures have been implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • over 90% fluorescent instead of incandescent light; • natural ventilation is provided; • no air conditioning; • only natural light is used in daytime; • insulation of roofs and, in cold climate, in walls; • the design of the facilities has made use of the solar energy; • heat flow through windows and doors is minimised by using proper insulation, double glazed windows and insulating strips are used; • a trained member of the staff is in charge with minimising the energy use and cost; • heat is produced and distributed by central heating systems; • all electric equipment is class A energy ("energy efficient"); • the building is made of wood, clay and straw bricks or other natural material in a proportion of at least 50% (both wood and clay retain the heat during winter and coolness in summer). 	A		

3.16 Evaluation criteria regarding energy use and consumption: transport

Ecotourism transport must also involve minimal energy consumption.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2 Compulsory	<p>a. Over 50% of the distance within the local ecotouristic activities use ecological means of transport: horse carts/sleighs, bicycles, walking etc. <i>Note: For Accommodation, the criterion applies only if the operator organises other local ecotourism activities such as hiking, visits to tourist sites etc.</i> <i>For Destinations, the tour type of products organised within them will be considered.</i></p>	A	T	D
1	<p>b. Energy consumption for transport is minimised through at least five of the following measures for accommodation and tour operator and at least three for destinatin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tours, routes and schedules are planned to reduce the travelling time and distances (including avoidance of crowdly areas and rush time); • tourists are encouraged to use fuel efficient transport (i.e. providing information on the public transport, providing bicycles for sightseeing); • staff are actively encouraged to walk, ride or use public transport to go to work (where applicable); • all vehicles are well maintained; • when choosing and/or purchasing vehicles the choices shall be fuel efficient; • use of electrically driven vehicles; • use of vehicles that do not require more than 10 l fuel/100km. 	A	T	D

3.17 Evaluation criteria regarding minimal disturbance to wildlife

For those who offer ecotourism activities in nature, the ecotourism operations must involve a minimal disturbance to the wildlife.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2 Appl. / Non Appl.	<p>a. The operation does not include regular and deliberate intrusions that may cause significant disturbance to wildlife behaviour in their natural habitat. <i>Note: For Tours, such intrusions include organising trips to the natural habitats of wild animals during periods which are not recommended by specialists (for example nesting), their watching at close quarters and direct interaction with them, if such actions were to disturb the animals' activity.</i> <i>For Destinations, all activities and products (tours) are considered.</i></p>		T	D

2 Appl. / Non Appl.	b. Activities that occur within the natural habitat of the wild animals are carried out according to the natural area management plan. <i>Notă: For Accommodation and Tours, if there is no management plan, the general rules imposed by the legislation and the specialists' recommendations are followed.</i> <i>For Destinations, a management plan is compulsory.</i>	A	T	D
1	c. The activities do not cause significant changes of the habitats (destroying the vegetation, nests, drying of the wetlands, etc).	A	T	D
1	d. Direct interaction with wild animals is only undertaken by staff with appropriate training and experience.	A	T	D
1	e. When the product offers direct interaction with wild animals by staff with appropriate training, it is conducted in such a way as not to cause any stress to the animals (it is not removed from its natural habitat, it is returned to the position where it was found etc.).	A	T	D
1	f. Wildlife feeding is only carried out by competent personnel. <i>Note: The staff who are allowed to feed the animals are empowered through their work or contract-based obligations, and permitted by the area's administrator / custodian.</i>	A	T	D
1	g. Flashlights and torches are not used in activities involving night watching (tree hollows of nocturnal fauna). Flashlights may only be used under direct surveillance of competent personnel for watching the amphibians with night activity. <i>Note: Competent personnel refers to specialists in the field or specialised guides or guides trained by specialists.</i>	A	T	D
1	h. Rotation of routes is used to reduce the repeated impact on the wildlife in the same sector. <i>Note: Products must be planned in such a way as to use alternative routes in the natural habitat of wild animals.</i> <i>For Destinations the criterion applies to all products of the type Tour offered by them.</i>		T	D

3.18 Evaluation criteria regarding the impact of spotlighting

During night activities, light sources must have a minimal impact on the animals.

Point s	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	The power of the light source does not exceed 30W. <i>Note: Light sources may be torches, lamps or other light generating devices.</i>		T	

3.19 Evaluation criteria regarding the impact of walking

Walking tours include all “tour” activities or individual walking offered by tour operators in nature.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	a. Groups of the walking tour are kept on existing tracks. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all products of the type Tour – hiking offered by the destination.</i>		T	D
2 Compulsory	b. A “carry in-carry out” policy is in place for all waste and litter, including food scraps. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all products of the type Tour – hiking offered by the destination.</i>		T	D
1	c. Wherever possible public toilets are used. If there are no public toilets, a hole of minimum 15 cm deep shall be made at least 100 m away from the path and the nearest water body. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all products of the type Tour – hiking offered by the destination.</i>		T	D
1	d. Tourists are encouraged to use fuel stoves; in case fires are lit, the following rules shall be strictly observed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fires are lit in existing fire places (if any); • only fallen branches or trees are used as firewood, on condition the area management allows this; • the guide ensures that the fire is fully extinguished with water (until no steam is visible) before removing camp; • fire is not allowed in the forest. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all products of the type Tour – hiking offered by the destination.</i>		T	D
1	e. Rotation of routes to reduce impact on one single site. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all products of the type Tour – hiking offered by the destination.</i>		T	D

3.20 Evaluation criteria regarding the impact of camping

Camping has, in general, minimal impact on the environment. However, it is necessary to follow the camping rules so that impact on the area is minimal.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2 Appl. / Non appl.	a. In the protected natural areas the camping regulation shall be strictly observed. In other areas, whenever possible, the existing camping sites shall be used. If this is not possible and a new camping site must be set, this shall never occur within an area with a high conservation value.		T	D

	<i>Note: For Destinations all products of the type Tour – hiking which include camping offered by the destination will be considered, as well as the specially designed areas for camping within the destination.</i>			
1	b. Wherever possible public toilets are used. If there are no public toilets, a hole of minimum 15 cm deep shall be made at least 100 m away from the path and the nearest water body. <i>Note: For Destinations all products of the type Tour – hiking which include camping offered by the destination will be considered, as well as the specially designed areas for camping within the destination.</i>		T	D
2 Appl. / Non appl.	c. A “carry in–carry out” policy is in place for all waste and litter, including food scraps. <i>Note: For Destinations all products of the type Tour – hiking which include camping offered by the destination will be considered, as well as the specially designed areas for camping within the destination.</i>		T	D
1	d. Tourists are encouraged to use fuel stoves; in case fires are lit, the following rules shall be strictly observed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fires are lit in existing fire places (if any); • only fallen branches or trees are used as firewood, on condition the area management allows this; • the guide ensures that the fire is fully extinguished with water (until no steam is visible) before removing camp; • fire is not allowed in the forest. <i>Note: For Destinations all products of the type Tour – hiking which include camping offered by the destination will be considered, as well as the specially designed areas for camping within the destination.</i>		T	D
1	e. Tourists have been informed on the practice codes to reduce the impacts that are specific to the operation. <i>Note: The practice codes refer to the tourists’ behaviour on the camping sites. The operator or guide must inform tourists of the camping rules applicable in the area.</i>		T	D

3.21 Evaluation criteria regarding the impact of power boats

In order to reduce the impact on the environment, the operations that offer tours with power boats must abide by a set of rules, as follows:

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2	a. Only the allowed routes for power boat are used. <i>Note: The routes allowed for power boats can be found in the sets of rules established by the administration of the area.</i>		T	D
1	b. When tourists travel in sensitive areas (on secondary channels) within the wetland (Danube Delta) the maximum		T	D

	admitted power of the boat is 10 CP. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all products of the type Tour with power boats offered by them.</i>			
1	c. When operating vessels, all the following measures are used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vessel wash does not affect river banks, lake shores or natural area processes; the speed of the vessel is set so as not to affect the nature experience of the other tourists in the area; where regular stops occur in the same location, moorings are designed and used instead of anchoring, to minimise the long term environmental impact; oil or grease contaminated water or untreated water is not discharged. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all products of the type Tour with power boats offered by them.</i>		T	D
2	d. A “carry in-carry out” policy is in place for all waste and litter, including food scraps. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all products of the type Tour with power boats offered by them.</i>		T	D
1	e. Tourists are informed about the practice codes for the reduction of the impact, specific to the operation. <i>Note: The operator or guide must inform tourists of all the rules regarding the use of power boats applicable in the area.</i>		T	D

3.22 Evaluation criteria regarding the impact of non-powered boats

The operations that offer tours with non-powered boats must equally follow a set of rules of good practice in ecotourism.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	a. When drawing near a bird colony, the boats are not allowed to reach the limit beyond which birds in the colony become stressed. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour – with non-powered boats – offered by them.</i>		T	D
2	b. Portage of crafts follows the routes advised /set by the natural area manager to minimise long-term environmental damage.		T	D
1	c. Mooring of vessels is conducted so that there is minimum impact on vegetation (i.e. when tying to trees a soft fabric is used to prevent rub; when the same location is used repeatedly the area is hardened with use of mooring rings, pylons etc.). <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour – with non-powered boats – offered by them.</i>		T	D
2	d. A “carry in – carry out” policy is in place for all waste and litter, including food scraps.		T	D

	<i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour – with non-powered boats – offered by them.</i>			
1	e. Tourists are informed about the practice codes for the reduction of the impact, specific to the operation. <i>Note: The operator or guide must inform tourists of all the rules regarding the use of non-powered boats applicable in the area.</i>		T	D

3.23 Evaluation criteria regarding the impact of aircraft use

The ecotourism operations that involve use of aircraft must ensure that their use will have a minimal impact on the environment.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	a. All the following measures are undertaken when operating aircrafts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • private runways and helipads are located as far as possible from public areas; • flights over the protected areas maintain a minimum height of 300m or any other altitude set by the manager of the protected area; • wildlife watching regulations are observed; • aircraft use does not have a negative effect on other tourists' experience in nature; • appropriate means to reduce the impact produced by fuel and oil spillage; • refuelling of aircraft does not occur in areas of high conservation value; • relatively undisturbed ecosystems, where native fauna and people on the ground may be disturbed by the noise are avoided. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour – with aircraft – offered by them.</i>		T	D
1	b. Aircrafts are powered and operated to minimise fuel for the necessary speed, capacity and type of operation. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour – with aircraft – offered by them.</i>		T	D
1	c. Tourists are informed about the practice codes for the reduction of the impact, specific to the operation. <i>Note: The operator or guide must inform tourists of all the rules regarding the use of aircraft applicable in the area.</i>		T	D

3.24 Evaluation criteria regarding the impact of rock climbing and abseiling

In order to avoid an impact on the environment, rock climbing and abseiling offered by tour operators must follow the set of rules outlined below:

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>a. All the following measures are taken when rock climbing and abseiling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excessive use of fixed equipment is avoided; • excessive use of chalk is avoided; • chipping of rock is avoided; • sites of geological, cultural or other scientific interest are avoided; • access to rocks is only achieved by the existing tracks; • all necessary approvals have been obtained from the natural area management; • wildlife (vegetation, bird nests) are not disturbed during climbing and abseiling; • during the nesting period it is not allowed to use tracks in close vicinity to nesting birds. <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all products of the type Tour – climbing and abseiling – offered by them.</i></p>		T	D
2	<p>b. Only performed on certified trails and, when applicable, accepted by the area manager.</p>		T	D
2	<p>c. A “carry in – carry out” policy is in place for equipment and litter.</p> <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all products of the type Tour – climbing and abseiling – offered by them.</i></p>		T	D
1	<p>d. Tourists are informed on the codes of practice to minimise the impacts that are specific to the product.</p> <p><i>Note: The codes of practice refer to the tourists’ behaviour when climbing and abseiling. The operator or guide must inform tourists of all the rules regarding these activities.</i></p>		T	D

3.25 Evaluation criteria regarding the impact of caving (show caves)

Ecotourism operators who offer caving operations will adopt the measures mentioned below so that their products have a minimal impact on the environment.

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	<p>a. Approval has been obtained from the relevant government agency or from the manager to enter the cave and in case the cave entrance is on a private property, the owner’s approval has been obtained.</p> <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour in show caves offered by them.</i></p>		T	D

1	<p>b. All the following measures are put in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if an entrance has been created or enlarged for tourists' access, a chamber has been installed between the cave entrance and the rest of the cave, to minimise air and temperature flow; • pathways do not block the natural water courses within the cave; • lighting is powered by electricity and is switched off when tourists are out of the cave. For long distances there is a modular lighting system, in sectors; • "cold lighting" replaces "warm lighting"; • access bridges must be so built as to be easily cleaned; • in case a gallery or cave is closed, when leaving, the access gate in the cave must be locked. 			D
1	<p>c. Before entering the cave the following measures on the tourists' behaviour have been set:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tourists are advised not to disturb the bat colonies and not to touch or move the elements that are specific to the cave, fossils, life forms, sediments or water courses; • tourists are informed that they must apply the "carry in-carry out" policy and no waste should be left inside the cave, human waste or biodegradable litter; • tourists are informed that smoking is not allowed and eating inside the cave may only be allowed when tours are long and difficult. <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour in show caves offered by them.</i></p>		T	D
1	<p>d. All the following building measures have been taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building materials are used and chosen to have a minimal impact on the underground landscape and habitats; • the choice of the building technologies meet the management plan of the cave, if a protected area, and/or have a minimal impact on the landscape and habitats (an impact survey must be carried out prior to structures and developments); • changes within or at the entrance of a cave must be minimal and consider the long/term impact; • for any change the necessary approvals must be obtained. 			D
2	<p>e. The operator organises the activity of litter collection to remove possible garbage left by tourists.</p>			D
1	<p>f. Camping is not allowed within 100 m around the cave entrance. Camping and bivouac inside the cave are only allowed if absolutely necessary.</p>		T	
2	<p>g. The manager is a member of or certified by the Romanian Federation of Speleologists (FRS) and has adopted its ethic code (Carta Speo).</p>			D
1	<p>h. Tourists are informed on the codes of practice to reduce the impact, specific of the product.</p> <p><i>Note: The codes of practice refer to the tourists' behaviour when caving. The operator or guide must inform the tourists of all the rules regarding this activity.</i></p>		T	D

3.26 Evaluation criteria regarding the impact of caving: wild caves

In order to have a minimal impact on the environment, the operation must adopt the measures outlined below:

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2	<p>a. No wild caving route contains /allows the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crossing of clean areas with clothes or footwear dirty with clay/mud (i.e. crossing the clean flow stone floors in boots); • venturing within three metres of high value cave elements; • venturing within three metres of cave-dwelling life forms; • pointing lights directly on cave life forms or disturbing any cave biota; • venturing on fragile underground areas (landscape or habitat); • collection or capture of the underground fauna. <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour in wild caves offered by them.</i></p>		T	D
1	<p>b. The following equipment is used in all wild cave tours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • soft material between ropes and natural anchors such as trees (i.e. carpet or cloth); • small back sacks tightly fitted to the body; • cave-marking materials so that missing markers can be replaced and routes clarified; • any marking of an underground route is provisory; • electric lighting system instead of acetylene to avoid smoke in the narrow passages. <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour in wild caves offered by them.</i></p>		T	D
1	<p>c. All the following measures are taken to manage the tourists' behaviour inside the visited wild cave:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helmets are never removed; • on the helmet is set the basic light, with good range, and long lasting, and spare batteries or carbide, water. The light on the helmet must be operational during the whole visit in the cave!; • in case of eating, plastic bags are used to avoid any litter or scrambles; • liquids for drinking (alcohol is totally forbidden) are carried in; • it is forbidden to throw the carried in liquids inside the cave; • camping inside the cave is not allowed except for long and difficult tours, when camp is set on sustainable surfaces, away from concretions, flood risk or habitats; • carrying out of all litter and waste, human waste included, is mandatory; • tourists are advised that smoking is not allowed; • acetylene lamps are to be avoided (the guide 		T	D

	<p>recommendations for each cave should be strictly observed) and if lamps need cleaning, the operation is carried out on a plastic bag, and the dirt taken out of the cave at the end of the tour.</p> <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour in wild caves offered by them.</i></p>			
1	<p>d. Maximum size of a group is 10 people (guide included) unless otherwise specified in the management plan.</p> <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour in wild caves offered by them.</i></p>		T	D
1	<p>e. Clothes, boots and back packs are cleaned and bacterias or fungi removed prior to entering the cave.</p> <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour in wild caves offered by them.</i></p>		T	D
1	<p>f. No information shall be released on the cave entrance location or on the routes inside the cave.</p>		T	D
1	<p>g. Tourists are informed on the codes of practice to reduce the impact specific to the product.</p> <p><i>Note: The codes of practice refer to the tourists' behaviour during caving. The operator or guide must inform tourists of all the rules regarding this activity.</i></p>		T	D
2	<p>h. A "carry in-carry out" policy is in place for all waste and litter, including human waste.</p> <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour in wild caves offered by them.</i></p>		T	D
1	<p>i. In case a gallery/cave is closed for the public, when leaving, the access gate is locked.</p> <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour in wild caves offered by them.</i></p>		T	D

3.27 Evaluation criteria regarding the impact of diving

In order for the operation to have a minimal impact in the environment, the following measures must be adopted:

Point s	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2	<p>a. All the following measures are undertaken when diving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beginners who cannot control flotability, only dive in areas where contact with the bottom of the water does not affect the flora and fauna substratum; • no creature is touched, chased or disturbed in their natural actions; • underwater fishing is totally forbidden; • it is not allowed to collect any animal, object, plant without relevant approval; 		T	D

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • routes or trails are set to minimise impact. <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour – diving offered by them.</i></p>			
1	<p>b. Tourists are informed on the codes of practice to reduce the impact specific to the product.</p> <p><i>Note: Codes of practice refer to tourists’ behaviour when diving. The operator or guide must inform tourists of all the rules regarding this activity.</i></p>		T	D
2	<p>c. A “carry in-carry out” policy is in place for all equipment and litter.</p> <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour – diving offered by them.</i></p>		T	D

3.28 Evaluation criteria regarding the impact of trail riding and animal tours

The operation that uses riding tours or animal transport must follow a set of rules whose aim is to reduce the impact of the product on the environment.

Point s	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2	<p>a. All the following measures have been taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • travel routes in natural areas are chosen to meet the recommendations of the area manager; • animals are in good condition before embarking; • animals’ hooves, tails and coats are clean (free of seeds and plant material) before entering areas of high conservation value; • animals’ food is clean, approved by a natural area manager and given using a nose bag; • where possible the animals are kept on designated tracks and existing roads, keeping to the centre of the track to avoid widening it; • if there are no tracks, the following procedures are used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • riders fan out on grassy or soft areas, and • riders ford water courses only at designated crossing, at a 90° angle to the bank; • regular contact with the natural area manager is maintained to inform on the road condition and be advised of appropriate routes and level of use; • tourists are informed on particular road conditions – sensitive or impacted tracks. <p><i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour – riding or to the products that use horse transport offered by them.</i></p>		T	D
1	b. Track remedial works, revegetating close tracks are performed.			D
1	c. Designated tie-up facilities for animals are used or a portable		T	D

	fence is carried. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour – riding or to the products that use horse transport offered by them.</i>			
1	d. Animals are penned overnight (rather than tied to a tree) at least 30 m for the nearest water body and in an area at least 15 sq.m for each animal). <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour – riding or to the products that use horse transport offered by them.</i>		T	D
1	e. Tourists are informed on the codes of practice to reduce the impact specific to the product. <i>Note: Codes of practice refer to the tourists' behaviour when horse riding. The operator or guide must inform the tourists of all the rules regarding this activity.</i>		T	D
2 Appl. / Non appl.	f. A policy of „carry in-carry out” will be in place regarding equipment and waste. <i>Note: For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products of the type Tour – riding or to the products that use horse transport offered by them.</i>		T	D

4. THE PRINCIPLE OF CONTRIBUTION TO CONSERVATION

Another principle of ecotourism is its positive contribution to the conservation of natural areas. Ecotourism involves the operators' participation in the conservation of the natural areas visited, offering constructive opportunities for the good management and conservation of these natural areas (i.e. through financial help in actions for the rehanbillitation of the natural areas, collection of the waste left by the tourists, or contributions to the conservation organisations).

4.1. Evaluation criteria regarding the active contribution of the ecotourism operation suppliers to the conservation and management of the natural areas

Point s	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
1	a. A co-operation agreement with the natural area manager (if any) which states how the contribution to the conservation of the area is performed. <i>Note: It is necessary to have a co-operation agreement between the operators and the manager of the natural area where the operation takes place. The administrators of the natural area can be: custodians, park administrators, area administration authorities (Town Halls, Local Councils, etc). If there is no such protocol, it is recommended that the following year a protocol should be signed.</i>	A	T	D

1	b. The operator ensures a financial contribution to local nature conservation plans of at least 3% of the value paid by each tourist (once/tourist/stay). <i>Note: With the financial contribution the operator supports nature conservation local projects or stimulates the beginning of such projects.</i>	A	T	D
2 Com puls ory	c. Adheres to one of the measures below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusion, within the touristic operation, of one concrete action for nature conservation; • active participation in an action / project of nature conservation; • donation / funding for a project / action of nature conservation; • direct involvement in projects of environmental education, other than those above). 	A	T	D

5. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Ecotourism provides sustainable contributions to the development of the local communities. The local community is integral to the ecotourism product in many situations. The benefits of ecotourism should be shared with the local communities. Local benefits may come from using the local guides, the purchase of provisions and local services and the use of the local facilities.

5.1. Evaluation criteria regarding the principle of constructive contribution to the development of the local communities

Point s	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to Accommodation (A) Tour (T) Destination (D)		
2 Com puls ory	Operators have taken five of the nine measures below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local guides are used to present the locally significant attractions and for regular training of other guides; • use of other people from the local community (kitchen staff, transport, etc.); • encouragement / purchase of local products, other than souvenirs; • use of other local services: guesthouses, hire of bicycles, carts etc; • encouraging tourists to buy locally produced souvenirs; • financial contribution to the creation of the local infrastructure or local events (festivals and other local traditional events); • development of a programme for advising and training the local people in tourism services; 	A	T	D

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • free access of the local people to training in order to improve their professional level; • providing opportunities for work practice / experience to one or several students living in the area. <p><i>Notă: "Local" refers to the area or one of the areas where the certified programme takes place.</i></p>			
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6. THE PRINCIPLE OF SENSIBILITY TOWARDS THE LOCAL CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

Although ecotourism deals mainly with the natural values of a region, many of them have a significant cultural value. Ecotourism operations and their planning should ensure a minimisation of the negative impact on the community in focus and on their lifestyle, providing at the same time, constructive long lasting contributions to these communities. Therefore ecotourism should highlight the cultural component of the visited area and contribute to the conservation of this component.

6.1. Evaluation criteria regarding the principle of sensitivity towards the local culture and traditions

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to		
		Accommodation (A)	Tour (T)	Destination (D)
1	<p>a. The ecotourism operation must ensure that tourists are advised on the code of behaviour to be adhered to within the visited communities.</p> <p><i>Note: The code of behaviour refers to the tourists' behaviour in relation to the ethical customs of the area (for example, when entering a church during service, visitors will wear decent clothing; will obtain the approval of the people in order to have their photograph taken, will not be aggressive in taking the photograph, etc.).</i></p>	A	T	D
2 Compulsory	<p>b. Operators must name three modalities they have adopted to stimulate the local traditions, customs or cuisine.</p>	A	T	D
1	<p>c. Tourists are offered accurate information that helps to better understand and appreciate the cultural values and local traditions.</p> <p><i>Note: Operators will ensure that the information offered to the tourists about the local culture and traditions doesn't contain major flaws.</i></p>	A	T	D

7. THE PRINCIPLE OF TOURIST SATISFACTION

Ecotourism meets tourist expectations. In developing ecotouristic operations one should consider the fact that generally the potential tourists have a high level of education and expectations. Therefore the level of the tourist satisfaction is essential, and the experience offered meets or surpasses the tourists' expectations

7.1. Evaluation criteria regarding the principle of the level of tourist satisfaction

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to		
		Accommodation (A)	Tour (T)	Destination (D)
2 Compulsory	<p>a. A mechanism for assessment of the tourist satisfactions is in place (i.e. questionnaire) and AER has access to the results of the assessment and monitoring.</p> <p><i>Note: AER's access to the results of the assessment is gained mainly through the presentation of these results to the assessor. Providing access to these results for the protected area managers might be useful.</i></p> <p><i>For Destinations the criterion applies to all the products they offer.</i></p>	A	T	D
2 Compulsory	<p>b. The maximum number of tourists and their guide typical for a tour is 15.</p> <p><i>Note: Each programme must clearly mention the maximum number of tourists which it is addressed.</i></p>		T	
1	<p>c. The operator has the obligation to offer each tourist the opportunity to contact AER (telephone number, e-mail, address) for comments and suggestions.</p>	A	T	D

8. THE PRINCIPLE OF RESPONSIBLE MARKETING

The aim is to obtain responsible marketing bringing about realistic expectations. Ecotourism marketing provides customers with full and responsible information that increases the respect for the natural and cultural environment of the destination areas and of the tourist satisfaction.

8.1. Evaluation criteria regarding the principle of responsible marketing

Points	CRITERION	Who it is addressed to		
		Accommodation (A)	Tour (T)	Destination (D)
2 Com	<p>a. Marketing is accurate and responsible, creating clear expectations of the client with regard to the programmes offered.</p>	A	T	D

<p>pulsory</p>	<p>The image is consistent with reality regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the particularities that describe the area being visited; - recognised values that make the area special (i.e. protected or endangered species, UNESCO heritage, etc.); - main activities permitted and performed by the tourists (i.e. skiing, camping, etc); - services and/or facilities; - the number of tourists in a group experiencing the product; - transport or accommodation capacity; - general ethics addressing minimal impact on the natural areas visited; - general ethics addressing minimal impact on the visited communities; - equipment, clothing suitable to the area visited; - consistency between published images and reality. <p><i>Note: The marketing image of the product is created by publicising brochures, publications, websites, images etc. which contain information about the product.</i></p> <p><i>For Destinations the criterion applies both to the general marketing image of the Destination and to all the products offered by it.</i></p>			
<p>1</p>	<p>b. The name of each place shown in the marketing images is mentioned (photographs, video images etc.)</p> <p><i>For Destinations the criterion applies both to the general marketing image of the Destination and to all the products offered by it.</i></p>	<p>A</p>	<p>T</p>	<p>D</p>
<p>1</p>	<p>c. The name of the author or source of the photographs is mentioned.</p> <p><i>For Destinations the criterion applies both to the general marketing image of the Destination and to all the products offered by it.</i></p>	<p>A</p>	<p>T</p>	<p>D</p>

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ANNEX No. 1
Sustainable Management Plan (SMP) – content proposal

Note: This is only an example. Each company or tour-operator can fill in this SMP according to their own current situation and context. The text in italics is meant as an explanation. It will not appear in the SMP.

Vision

S.C. offers tourism services with a minimum impact on nature and wishes to increase the quality of life in the community where it operates through a correct attitude towards employees and the promotion of local products, culture and traditions. *(The **vision** and **objectives** of the company are part of SMP. The company's vision is in accordance with the principles of ecotourism.)*

Objectives

1. conservation of natural resources and reduction of impact on the environment
2. stimulating local community development through employment of personnel from local communities and promotion of local culture and traditions
3. ensuring safe and high quality services
4. employees and tourists benefit from work safety and activity programme safety, respectively

Action plan

1. Conservation of natural resources and reduction of impact on the environment

In order to reduce water consumption we take the following measures *(The company has a set of actions that specify the measures taken in order to reduce water consumption [3.10 Evaluation criteria regarding water supply and water reduction and 3.11 Evaluation criteria regarding waster water]):*

- we use ceramic filter taps and reduced water pressure taps;
- we use toilet bowls with controllable water flow;
- we have showers in bathrooms rather than bathtubs;
- we use a reduced amount of water for plants (water-dropping systems or watering plants especially in the morning or evening);
- we collect rainwater and use it for various activities;
- we adopt other measures to limit the amount of used water;
- we display notices about reduction of water consumption;
- we encourage customers to use the towels for several days;
- we connect all tourist facilities to a sewerage system or introduce a system of collection, retention and treatment of water or evacuation of waste water through a water treatment plant. *Note: The facilities refer to buildings, household annexes, parking lots, toilets, bathrooms, sinks, etc. that use water and produce waste water.*

Reduction of the amount of waste and refuse *(The company has a set of actions that specify the measures taken in order to reduce the amount of waste and refuse [3.14 Evaluation criteria regarding reduction of the amount of waste and refuse]).*

- we buy materials in such a way as to avoid excessive packaging;
- we do our best to use biodegradable packaging;
- we use only reusable or biodegradable recipients (e.g. glasses);
- we use disposable items (utensils and recipients) only in special situations, at most once /person/tour;

- we encourage both personnel and tourists to take part in programmes of collection, recycling and reduction of the amount of waste;
- we collect and remove all the waste encountered on our way;
- we make compost out of organic waste;
- we organise or subsidise (funding, work force, in-kind etc.) cleaning days (at least once a year).

Reduction of energy consumption *(The company has a set of actions that specify the measures taken regarding the use and consumption of energy (3.15, 3.16))*

- we use over 90% fluorescent light instead of incandescent light;
- the rooms are ventilated naturally;
- during the day only natural light is used (as far as possible);
- we use solar energy;
- loss of heat through windows and doors is reduced through adequate sealing, use of double-glazed windows and insulation strips;
- a trained employee is responsible for making energy consumption more efficient;
- heat is produced and distributed through central heating systems;
- the electrical equipment is class A “energy efficient”;
- the building is made at least 50% of wood or other natural material;
- the tours, routes and timetables are planned in such a way as to reduce the travelling time and distances (including through avoiding crowded areas and rush hours);
- we encourage tourists to use fuel-efficient transport (e.g. offering information regarding public transport, offering hire bikes to visit tourist attractions);
- we encourage employees to walk, to use bicycles or public transport to get to work;
- all the vehicles are well maintained (up-to-date technical inspection);
- when choosing and / or buying vehicles, efficient fuel consumption will be taken into account;
- we use vehicles that do not consume more than 10 litres / 100 km.

Reduction of impact on air, soil and water *(The company has a set of actions that specify the measures taken regarding air, soil and water protection (3.6, 3.12, 3.13))*

- tourist facilities and activities (e.g. building, paths) do not lead to change of land use, change in water courses, total displacement of vegetation, etc.;
- we use fences, hedges, barriers or other adequate signs to maintain traffic in defined areas for certain categories of users;
- we only deposit waste in specially designed places;
- the normal level of noise produced by the whole amount of activities within the product (including phonecalls, systems of public communication, transport operations, concerts, music, equipment and mechanical installations) does not go significantly beyond the background noise of the area;
- service and maintenance facilities that generate noise are placed at a distance from quiet areas or are noiseproof. Note: Quiet areas are considered those that are prepared for recreation (e.g. bedrooms, parks, gardens, swimming pools, public baths);
- we offer tourists the possibility to enjoy the „peace of nature”;
- there are no obnoxious smells associated with air-polluting emissions;
- burning waste will take place only in a controlled way and without provoking a visible degradation of the air.

2. Stimulating local community development through hiring personnel from local communities and promoting local culture and traditions.

Stimulating local community development is done through the following actions:

- we use local guides' services to present significant local attractions and to systematically prepare other guides;
- we use the services of other local people (e.g. personnel for the kitchen, transport, etc.);
- we encourage the purchase of local products and gifts;
- we use other local services (e.g. hiring bikes, carts etc.);
- we contribute financially to the creation of local infrastructure or local events (e.g. festivals and other local traditions);
- we offer the opportunity of practice to students/young people who live in the area, in order to have some work experience in the field of ecotourism.

Promotion of local culture and traditions:

- we communicate to tourists a code of behaviour that needs adopting within the local community;
- we present to tourists the customs of the area, we encourage the participation in traditional festivals;
- we serve food specific to the area;
- we purchase local products as far as possible: souvenirs, food and drink etc.

3. Ensuring safe and high quality services

- we have done a risk analysis which contains activities that have an impact on the environment and on the work safety, and measures to counterbalance these risks have been identified;
- in case of unforeseen circumstances we have a person in charge of resolving the problem as soon as possible;
- tourists have access to a list of contact people in case of emergency that includes: fire guard service; natural area administration, mountain rescue, hospital, others;
- all the employees of the company carry „safety equipment” in case it might be necessary;
- proper use of equipment is explained by the manager of the company or firm / specially trained people;
- at least one employee of the company has been trained to give first aid and to take part in the activities that involve first aid. The first aid kit is available at any time and kept somewhere accessible.

4. Employees and tourists benefit from both work place safety and safety of the activities they take part in.

- the company and all the employees are insured according to the category of activities they organise and take part in, respectively;
- the participants in all these activities receive clear information regarding the insurance included in the product of the company.