

Green Key conference centres criteria and explanatory notes

1 January 2022 – 31 December 2025



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Introduction

The Green Key conference centre criteria are applicable for conference centres in locations without accommodation. In order to be eligible for Green Key, the applicant establishment must be officially registered as a conference centre with this function being officially registered as its main activity.

Criteria marked with (I) are imperative criteria, while criteria marked with (G) are guideline criteria. The applicant must comply with all imperative criteria and an increasing number of applicable guideline criteria according to the number of years for which the award has been held, as per the following table:

Year	Percentage of total guideline criteria
1	0%
2	5%
3	10%
4	15%
5-9	20%
10+	50%

1. Environmental management

1.1 The management must be involved and must appoint an environmental manager from amongst the staff of the establishment. (I)

To ensure that Green Key is properly implemented and administered, the management of the establishment is in charge of appointing an environmental manager from the staff of the establishment.

Where relevant, it is strongly recommended to create a “green committee” with representatives from all departments. The “green committee” oversees the implementation of the environmental/sustainability initiatives in cooperation with the environmental manager, as well as keeping other staff members in the various parts of the establishment informed.

The appointed environmental manager fulfils, in most cases, a part-time function. It can be any staff member, but is most often the chief engineer, the person responsible for housekeeping, front desk, HR, or the general manager. The position of environmental manager should be mentioned in the person's job description.

The main functions of the environmental manager include:

- Being contact person for all environmental/sustainability matters to management, staff, suppliers, and Green Key national/international representatives
- Being responsible for instructing and supporting other staff members on environmental/sustainability matters
- Being responsible for gathering, managing, and updating the environmental data on cleaning, waste, and the efficient use of gas, water, and electricity
- Being responsible for the development and implementation of the environmental policy and action plan of the establishment

- Being responsible for gathering and processing new sustainability ideas and initiatives from staff and guests

The environmental manager oversees the communication with Green Key in relation to the application or re-application for Green Key. In the case of an establishment changing environmental manager, Green Key is to be informed about the change.

During the audit, the environmental manager is normally present to answer questions and explain about the work done at the establishment with regards to environmental matters in general and Green Key related criteria specifically.

1.2 The establishment must formulate a sustainability policy. (I)

To ensure an overall framework for the sustainability work of the establishment, a sustainability policy, also called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy, is formulated. It describes the overall aims and ambitions in relation to the establishment's environmental, social, and economic impact. The sustainability policy is a general statement with a commitment for continuous improvements and monitoring, but it does not deal with specific issues or how to handle them. The sustainability policy should be more ambitious than merely complying with legislation and regulations. The sustainability policy of the establishment is to be reviewed every third year to allow for continuous improvement.

The sustainability policy must include a) presentation of the environmental commitment and goals of the establishment, and b) presentation of the social/cultural/economic/quality commitment and goals of the establishment.

The environmental commitment should include:

- consumption of resources (energy, water, etc.)
- commitment to apply the circular economy principles
- consumption and monitoring of environmental pollutants, for example chemical cleaning products, air pollutants and fertilizers/pesticides
- reducing the carbon footprint
- supporting the protection of local or international biodiversity

The social, cultural, and economic commitment should include:

- labour rights and equity (including prohibition on using child labour)
- safe and secure working environment
- risk and crisis management
- anti-corruption
- opposition to commercial, sexual or any other form of exploitation or harassment, particularly of children, adolescents, women, minorities, and other vulnerable groups
- support for the equal treatment and rights of people
- hiring staff in all positions including management (especially local residents/minorities), without discrimination on the grounds of age, race, gender, religion, disability, socio-economic status, etc.
- reference to training, information, and awareness-raising
- reference to the support of the local community
- support for the establishment's involvement in sustainable tourism planning and management locally

It is strongly encouraged that the sustainability policy is developed in cooperation with the staff and compiled in a way that includes contributions from both the management and the staff. The sustainability policy is normally signed by the general manager of the establishment. After development, the sustainability policy is available to all employees of the establishment.

It is strongly encouraged that each establishment has its own sustainability policy, but if the establishment is part of an international or national chain, a common sustainability policy could be shared within the same chain.

During the audit, the establishment presents the sustainability policy document and verifies its availability to the staff of the establishment. A check will be conducted to ensure that the sustainability policy is less

than three years old and that it is a general document, including environmental issues as well as socio-cultural and economic issues.

1.3 The establishment must formulate objectives and an annual action plan for continuous improvement. (I)

To ensure a more concrete plan for the sustainability work of the establishment, objectives are set, and an annual action plan is formulated. The objectives and annual action plan reflect the concrete work towards fulfilling the sustainability policy and include specific objectives to be reached in the coming 1-3 years and specific actions for reaching the planned objectives in the coming year.

In order to define concrete objectives and actions for the long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its size and scale, the establishment's objectives and action plan includes environmental issues as well as reference to social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health, risk, and crisis management issues.

It is strongly encouraged that the objectives and annual action plan document are developed in cooperation with the staff and compiled in a way that includes contributions from both the management and the staff.

It is expected that the establishment will formulate a minimum of three action points within different areas of its operation. When preparing the objectives and annual action plan, it is strongly encouraged to use the Green Key criteria for inspiration, both regarding compliance with guideline criteria not yet implemented and to further improve engagement in already implemented imperative and guideline criteria. It should be noted that the establishment must ensure compliance with an increasing percentage of guideline criteria during consecutive years of holding the Green Key award. Objectives and actions that are already fulfilled cannot be added to the objectives and annual action plan.

If the establishment is part of a larger chain, there can be an overlap between the objectives/actions formulated within the chain and the ones used in Green Key.

During the audit, there is an administrative check on the presence and content of the objectives and annual action plan document for the coming year, and its availability for the staff of the establishment. It is checked that the document includes a minimum of three action points within different sustainability areas and different areas of operation. If the establishment has had the Green Key for more than one year, there is also an evaluation of the work for the objectives and annual action plan in the previous year. Where some planned actions were not carried out, there is a discussion about why the applicant establishment was not able to carry out the planned actions during the past year with recommendation for remedial action.

1.4 All documentation concerning the Green Key must be kept and maintained in a binder ready for inspection. (I)

To have all information easily accessible, the Green Key binder is normally organised according to the Green Key criteria sections and numbers and contains all the relevant and updated documents showing compliance with each criterion.

The Green Key binder can be a physical binder with paper copies of the various documents, or it can be an electronic binder with the documents organised in folders (e.g. as part of the Intranet of the establishment). To save resources, it is recommended that the binder is electronic.

During the audit, the environmental manager presents the Green Key binder for inspection and for proof of compliance with the various Green Key criteria.

1.5 The establishment establishes active collaboration with relevant local stakeholders. (I)

The aim of this criterion is to enhance the active role the establishment plays in creating environmental awareness in the local area around it and promoting environmentally friendly practices to collaborating partners.

The criterion is mainly focusing on collaboration on environmental issues (e.g. protection of the local biodiversity), but it could also refer to social, cultural, educational, economic, quality, human rights, health, risk, and crisis management issues. Where appropriate, Green Key encourages the establishment to cooperate with stakeholders involved in the protection and enhancement of local historical, archaeological, cultural, and spiritually significant sites and traditions.

The relevant stakeholders could be non-governmental organisations, local community groups, local authorities, local residents, local schools, suppliers, management authorities of protected areas, etc.

Examples of local cooperation could include cooperation with local schools on educational and/or sustainability initiatives, supporting museums to promote local heritage, cooperation with local suppliers (other than the sole purchasing of local products), cooperation with local community groups/destination management organisations/authorities on sustainable tourism planning and management in the destination, local infrastructure and social community development projects (e.g. sanitation).

Local cooperation, including cooperation on various biodiversity and environmental protection initiatives (e.g. tree-planting, rewilding and creating pollinator-friendly local areas and natural corridors, nature conservation, beach clean-up events, etc.), is strongly encouraged.

For the collaboration to be approved, it must be an active two-way collaboration between the establishment and the relevant stakeholders for the benefit of both parties.

Conference centres must have a minimum of one (1) active partnership with a local stakeholder.

During the audit, documentation showing active collaboration with the required number of local stakeholders will be checked.

1.6 The establishment calculates its carbon footprint using a carbon measurement tool. (G)

With this criterion, the establishment identifies its sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and uses its measured annual energy consumption and other sources of GHG emissions to make an estimate of its total annual carbon footprint, as well as the carbon emissions per guest using a carbon measurement tool. The calculation could be used to check the fluctuations in carbon emissions of the establishment from period to period with the aim of reducing it.

During the audit, the establishment presents the carbon measurement tool used and the calculated results.

1.7 The establishment sets a concrete target to reduce its carbon footprint. (G)

With this criterion, the establishment uses its calculated carbon footprint as a basis for formulating a target to further reduce carbon emissions by a certain percentage. The establishment also identifies the actions needed to reach the target, e.g. reduction in energy consumption, increasing efficiency measures and/or installing onsite renewable energy systems.

For carbon emissions that cannot be avoided, the establishment could compensate its remaining emissions through a carbon compensation scheme. This can be through an international certification scheme, e.g. Gold Standard certified schemes, or it can be other international/national schemes, for instance the [Global Forest Fund](#) managed by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). Carbon compensation through tree planting can be done locally at or near the establishment itself, or it can be done in another area, but tree planting should always be done so that it supports the local indigenous flora and fauna.

During the audit, the establishment presents the target and actions for reducing the carbon footprint. This can be included in the annual action plan (see criterion 1.3). If the establishment is compensating emissions through a scheme, the establishment must provide supporting documentation.

1.8 The establishment is verified carbon neutral in line with scope 1 and 2 of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Standard. (G)

With this criterion, the establishment confirms through a third-party verification that it operates its activities in a carbon neutral manner.

It is a requirement that the establishment conducts a yearly carbon footprint calculation, including direct emissions from its owned or controlled sources (scope 1 emissions) and indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy (scope 2 emissions). It is recommended but not required that the establishment also considers all other indirect emissions that occur in the value chain of the establishment (scope 3 emissions).

To comply with this criterion, the establishment ensures that:

- The carbon footprint calculations are verified by an independent third-party verifier/auditor according to the “Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol” or any other internationally recognised guideline and standards, such as ISO 14064 or PAS 2060.
- The establishment has an emission monitoring and reduction strategy in place.
- The unavoidable scope 1 and 2 emissions are compensated using carbon offsets from recognised standards accepted by the “International Carbon Reduction & Offset Alliance” for scope 1 emissions, energy attribute certificates recognised by [RECS](#), or carbon offsets for scope 2 emissions.

During the audit, the establishment presents a) the carbon footprint verification statement from an independent, accredited auditor, b) the updated carbon reduction strategy for the relevant year, and c) the carbon offsets and/or energy attribute certificates confirming that the total carbon emissions are compensated by the retirement of the appropriate amount of carbon credits and/or energy attribute certificates in recognised registries.

1.9 The establishment offers its guests a possibility to compensate their emissions through a carbon scheme. (G)

With this criterion, the establishment offers its guests the possibility to compensate the carbon emissions generated during their visit and/or travel to the establishment.

After an establishment has calculated its average carbon emission per guest (see criterion 1.6), the establishment offers its guests the opportunity to compensate the carbon emissions of their stay. In addition, the establishment can offer its guests the possibility to compensate the carbon emissions of their travel to and from the establishment.

The compensation should be done through a carbon compensation scheme, e.g. a scheme that holds an international certification, e.g. Gold Standard, or other international/national schemes, for instance the [Global Forest Fund](#) managed by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE).

The establishment offers the carbon compensation by promoting a carbon compensation scheme to the guests and providing them with information about it and a link to the scheme. Alternatively, the establishment can also collect the funding from the carbon compensation of the guests and then send it to the carbon compensation scheme.

The establishment can choose to offer the carbon compensation to guests individually, or it can be offered to companies organising the guests’ stay at the establishment (e.g. conference organisers, etc.).

During the audit, the establishment presents the information it supplies to its guests encouraging them to avail of carbon compensation to offset their stay and/or travel to and from the establishment.

2. Staff Involvement

2.1 The management holds periodic meetings with the staff to brief them on issues concerning existing and new environmental initiatives. (I)

To raise the environmental/sustainability awareness at the establishment, it is important that the management, environmental manager and/or green committee ensure an information flow to the staff and engage the staff in the environmental/sustainability initiatives set by the establishment.

Keeping the staff updated about existing and new environmental/sustainability initiatives gives the staff a better understanding of their role in the work and the impact of their contribution, but also enables them to properly inform, and answer questions from guests on the matter. The staff is not only informed about the environmental/sustainability initiatives, but also has the opportunity to contribute ideas and suggestions.

The information includes issues of environmental management (e.g. water, energy, waste, cleaning, food and beverage, and the circular economy principles: reduce, reuse, recycle, etc.), and other sustainability issues (e.g. local biodiversity issues), but also issues of awareness-raising of guests, staff, suppliers and the surrounding community. Information about Green Key must also be provided to the staff.

The management of the establishment therefore normally organises at least 1-3 annual meetings. When planning the meetings, consideration is given to seasonal employees to ensure the broadest possible staff participation.

This criterion considers both internal staff hired by the establishment as well as staff contracted from an external company.

During the audit, minutes/notes/attendance lists from the meetings held between the management and staff are presented, showing the persons present and the environmental/sustainability issues discussed. If the establishment is applying for the first time, it presents the planned meetings. If the total number of staff members is below five, the information about the meetings held can be given orally. The auditor may also interview staff to ascertain their level of knowledge on environmental initiatives of the establishment.

2.2 The environmental manager must participate in meetings with management for the purpose of presenting the environmental developments of the establishment. (I)

If the environmental manager is not part of the management of the establishment, he/she must be invited to meetings with the management. The meetings between the environmental manager (and the green committee, where applicable) and the management of the establishment are important to keep the management informed and involved in the environmental work of the establishment, as well as to ensure continued endorsement by the management of the work on environmental issues. In some smaller establishments the meetings between the staff and management, and between the environmental manager and management, can be held at the same time. It is expected that the establishment normally holds at least 1-3 annual meetings.

During the audit, minutes/notes from the meetings held between the management and environmental manager (and green committee) are presented, showing the persons present and the environmental/sustainability issues discussed. If the establishment is applying for the first time, it presents the planned meetings.

2.3 Staff members must receive yearly training on environmental and other sustainability issues. (I)

It is important that the environmental manager (and green committee), as well as other staff members, receive specific training on environmental and other sustainability issues, so that suitable and feasible solutions for the establishment can be determined and implemented.

The training includes issues of environmental management (water, energy, waste, hazardous chemicals, cleaning, food and beverage, air quality, environmentally friendly use of appliances, the circular economy principles: reduce, reuse, recycle, etc.), awareness-raising of guests, staff, suppliers and the surrounding community, as well as other sustainability issues, addressing climate change, local biodiversity, social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health, risk, and crisis management issues. Training should also include knowledge about Green Key and could also be extended to add knowledge on other issues within or around the establishment (e.g. protection of biodiversity).

The training can be both external and internal. External training could be in the form of training courses by consultants, experts, guides or product suppliers, study trips, participation in seminars, webinars and other online courses and studies, networks, etc. In some countries, Green Key seminars and webinars are organised to especially focus on trends and ideas in relation to compliance with Green Key criteria, and these meetings can also be used as a networking platform between Green Key awarded establishments. For establishments that are members of an international or national chain, there is often training conducted on environmental and other sustainability topics within the chain.

It is also important that internal courses and training are organised by the environmental manager (and green committee) for staff members on how to work towards achieving the environmental objectives and actions planned within the establishment. The internal training can involve individual staff members or groups of staff members. In addition to the training, the establishment can offer engaging sustainability initiatives (e.g. competitions) and/or reward systems for the staff.

It is expected that each staff member in the establishment normally participates in at least 1-3 annual training sessions organised by the establishment. New staff members should normally receive the training within the first four weeks of their employment.

For persons working in the establishment on a daily basis but not employed as staff by the establishment (e.g. persons working in housekeeping from an outsourced company), it is strongly encouraged that these persons also receive the same training on environmental and other sustainability issues.

During the audit, a document must be presented, showing the external/internal training sessions held in the past 12 months, with information about participating staff covering the areas of environmental management and awareness-raising, and other sustainability topics. If the establishment is applying for the first time, it presents the planned training. During the visual inspection, staff members might be interviewed to confirm that they have received training.

2.4 Information is displayed in the staff area to promote responsible behaviour. (I)

To reduce both the environmental footprint and costs, signage/instructions are displayed in the staff area reminding the staff of the sustainability initiatives of the establishment.

The signage/instructions should encourage the staff to use resources wisely (e.g. switching off the light/taps, using less paper, etc.) and help them to use devices and machines more efficiently (e.g. the dishwasher, laundry machines, vacuum cleaners, etc.) In addition, information could reference protection of the local biodiversity, etc. as well as social responsibility (e.g. how to report discrimination, etc.).

Raising awareness of the staff about the sustainability undertakings of the establishment can be achieved through staff notice boards, posters, stickers, leaflets, newsletters, digital information on screens/apps, etc. Depending on the type and form of awareness-raising activity, it could be aimed at individuals, groups or all staff members at the same time.

During the visual inspection, the signage and instructions are shown to the auditor.

2.5 *The establishment provides its staff with the opportunity to evaluate its environmental and/or socio-cultural performance. (G)*

To involve all staff members in the environmental and social initiatives of the establishment and to empower them to actively contribute to the sustainability work, the establishment provides a feedback mechanism whereby staff can evaluate the environmental and/or social performance of the establishment and make suggestions for improvement.

This can be done by conducting regular surveys on the matter, during feedback meetings or through a suggestion box that is managed by the environmental manager. The feedback can be given anonymously.

During the audit, the feedback mechanism is shown to the auditor.

3. Guest Information

3.1 The Green Key award must be displayed in a prominent place. (I)

The establishment is required to display the standard Green Key plaque near the entrance to the premises and the standard Green Key certificate by the front desk.

Additional copies of the Green Key plaque and Green Key certificate can be purchased and placed at other strategic locations (e.g. at the staff information board or canteen). In addition to the plaque and certificate, it is also possible for the establishment to purchase a Green Key flag.

The display of the award is used by the establishment as a marketing tool presenting the achievement of the Green Key award, but also to create visibility for the Green Key label.

During the audit, it is checked that the standardised Green Key plaque and the Green Key certificate for the current period are displayed. If the establishment has not received the Green Key award in the past, the proposed location for the display of the plaque and the certificate is shown.

3.2 Information about Green Key must be visible and accessible for guests. (I)

The guests visiting the establishment must be able to find information about the requirements for achieving the Green Key.

Information about Green Key can be available in public areas if prominently placed, e.g. by an “environmental corner”, on TV monitors in public areas, information at the front desk, etc. The information about Green Key can also be available in the information folders, TV monitors in the meeting rooms, etc. The Green Key logo (in the correct format) is normally displayed as part of the information.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear and easily understandable information regarding the establishment and its products and services, including sustainability claims, and must not promise more than can be or is implemented by the establishment.

During the audit, it is checked that the informative material about Green Key is visible and accessible in the public areas and/or meeting rooms. If the establishment did not receive the Green Key award in the past, the draft informative materials, and location(s) where it will be available are presented. It is checked that the information is accurate, clear, and easily understandable.

3.3 Information about Green Key and environmental information must be available on the establishment's website. (I)

The establishment's website must contain brief information about the Green Key programme and the fact that the establishment has achieved the award. The links to the international Green Key website (www.greenkey.global) and/or national Green Key website are included. It is encouraged that the Green Key logo (in the correct format) is displayed. The website also displays brief information about the environmental undertakings of the establishment. The information is presented in accordance with the establishment's own branding guidelines.

In addition to the information on the website of the establishment, it is also encouraged that the establishment provides information about Green Key in its social media.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear and easily understandable information regarding the establishment and its products and services, including sustainability claims, and must not promise more than can be or is implemented by the establishment.

During the audit, the information about Green Key and environmental information on the website is shown. If the establishment has not received the Green Key award in the past, the draft information for the website is presented. It is checked that the information is accurate, clear and easily understandable.

3.4 The establishment must keep the guests informed about and involved in its environmental work and encourage guests to participate in environmental initiatives. (I)

It is important that the establishment informs its guests about the environmental undertakings of the establishment through information material or TV monitors in public areas, meeting rooms, etc.

Besides the information about the environmental undertakings, it is also important that the establishment adds information about how the guests can be involved and actively participate in the environmental initiatives of the establishment. The active participation can involve environmental management (e.g. water saving, energy saving, waste saving/recycling, food waste reduction, etc.), but can also focus on other sustainability issues (e.g. local biodiversity protection, support to social charities, etc.).

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear and easily understandable information regarding the establishment and its products and services, including sustainability claims, and must not promise more than can be or is implemented by the establishment.

During the audit, the information about environmental/sustainability undertakings provided for guests is presented, including the encouragement for guests to participate in the work. If the establishment has not received the Green Key award in the past, the draft information for the guests is presented. It is checked that the information is accurate, clear, and easily understandable.

3.5 Staff in charge of welcoming guests must be able to inform the guests about Green Key and the current environmental/sustainability initiatives of the establishment. (I)

With the Green Key award (plaque and certificate) being displayed by the entrance of the establishment, and information about Green Key and environmental/sustainability undertakings displayed in the public areas, meeting rooms and on the website of the establishment, guests might be interested in learning more about Green Key. In this case, guests might approach the staff in charge of welcoming them (e.g. reception staff) and it is therefore important that these persons are able to inform guests about Green Key and the most important environmental/sustainability initiatives of the establishment.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear and easily understandable information regarding the establishment and its products and services, including sustainability claims, and must not promise more than can be or is implemented by the establishment.

During the audit, the staff in charge of welcoming guests are asked to provide basic information about Green Key and the most important environmental/sustainability initiatives of the establishment. It is checked that the information is accurate, clear, and easily understandable.

3.6 The establishment informs and encourages guests to use sustainable transportation alternatives. (I)

To encourage guests staying at the establishment to use means of transportation other than cars and taxis, where feasible and safe, the establishment must be able to inform guests about these alternatives.

The alternative means of transportation includes:

- Local public/private transportation systems (bus, train, metro, tram, boat, etc.)
- Shared taxis/minibus systems
- Taxis from companies that have an environmental policy, e.g. using electric cars, biofuel petrol, etc.
- Shuttle buses provided by the establishment
- Other means of transportation including bicycling opportunities and walking alternatives

For guests using electric cars, the establishment could have a smart electric vehicle charging station or inform about the nearby locations for charging electric cars.

The information about local transportation systems and other transportation alternatives is provided by the persons welcoming guests, front desk staff, the concierge and/or through information material available in the public areas or meeting rooms.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear and easily understandable information regarding the establishment and its products and services, including sustainability claims, and must not promise more than can be or is implemented by the establishment.

During the audit, the information provided by the establishment about local transportation systems and other transportation alternatives is presented. It is checked that the information is accurate, clear, and easily understandable.

3.7 The establishment provides its guests with the opportunity to evaluate its performance, including the sustainability performance. (G)

A feedback questionnaire can provide an indication of the guests' satisfaction in relation to the performance of an establishment. Besides covering more general issues (such as quality, price, service, etc.), it must also include questions related to the sustainability performance of the establishment.

If the guest feedback in the evaluation requires corrective action, this must be done by the establishment, where possible.

During the audit, the establishment shows the evaluation questions relating to sustainability performance, as well as providing examples of how the guest feedback is monitored and used in corrective actions.

4. Water

4.1 The total water consumption must be registered at least once a month. (I)

For the establishment to reduce its environmental footprint and cut costs, it is first of all necessary to have a regular recording of the total water consumption at least once a month. If available, the source of water is indicated, and if the water is not delivered through public suppliers, it is checked that the water supply is sustainable and does not adversely affect the environment and local water supply.

The data should be analysed and used actively with the goal of reducing water consumption. It is encouraged to register the total water consumption more frequently than once a month, as it will provide more detailed information.

Should any major changes in water consumption occur (especially in the form of larger consumption than expected), the establishment has procedures in place to immediately investigate what may be the reason for the water consumption changes and to implement corrective actions.

During the audit, the minimum monthly registration of the total water consumption is presented. The establishment shows the procedures for investigating and correcting in case of sudden changes in total water consumption. If the water is not delivered through a public supplier, the establishment documents that the source is sustainable and does not adversely affect the environment and local water supply.

4.2 Newly purchased toilets have a 3/6 litres dual flush. (I)

As dual flush toilets ensure a smaller environmental footprint through a reduced water consumption and also cut costs, toilets purchased within the last 12 months for guest rooms, public areas and/or staff areas should have a dual flush with a maximum of 3/6 litres (0.79/1.59 US gallons) per flush. In some cases, the flush water consumption could be further reduced without compromising the comfort of the guests and staff.

Newly purchased toilets with sensors allowing a maximum of 4.5 litres (1.19 US gallons) per flush can also be accepted.

During the audit, receipts for toilets purchased in the past 12 months indicating a dual flush of maximum 3/6 litres must be presented, and the presence of dual flush toilets is visually inspected.

4.3 The staff must have a system in place to regularly check for dripping taps and leaky toilets. (I)

Dripping taps and leaking toilets in public areas (including conference areas) and staff areas may cause a negative effect on the environmental footprint through excessive water consumption and cause unnecessary costs.

The standard operating procedures that are in place include regularly checking for visibly dripping taps and leaky toilets. In the case of dripping taps or leaky toilets being observed, corrective actions to fix the leak are implemented.

During the audit, the standard operating procedures for regularly checking for dripping taps and leaky toilets, as well as the corrective actions for implementation after observing leaks are presented. During the visual inspection, there is a spot check for dripping taps and leaky toilets.

4.4 Water flow in at least 75% of the taps must not exceed 8 litres per minute. (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint through water savings and also cut costs, the water flow in at least 75% of the taps in public areas (including conference areas) and in the staff areas must not exceed 8 litres (or 2.11 US gallons) per minute.

In many cases, the water flow in the taps could be further reduced without compromising the comfort of the guests.

To comply with the criterion, the establishment can either choose to have taps built with restricted water flow or have water restricting devices installed on the tap. The reduced water flow is often achieved by mixing water with air in tap aerators. A short-term solution can also be to reduce the water pressure in the water distribution system.

During the audit, sample measurements of the water flow in a few selected taps in different parts of the establishment are carried out.

4.5 Urinals have sensors, water saving devices, or are water-free. (I)

Urinals in the establishment can contribute to a reduced environmental footprint through lower water consumption and cut costs. If the establishment has urinals, the urinals must either have detection sensors or a “push” button (not flushing more than 3 litres or 0.79 US gallons per minute) or be water-free. Each urinal has individual sensors.

During the audit, the urinals are visually checked for individual detection sensors, a push button with restricted water flow, or being water-free.

4.6 Newly purchased cover or tunnel dishwashers do not consume more water than 3.5 litres per basket. (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint through water savings and cut costs, professional cover or tunnel dishwashers in the kitchen purchased within the last 12 months must not use more than 3.5 litres (or 0.92 US gallons) per basket.

Establishments without a large professional kitchen are exempted from this criterion.

During the audit, receipts for purchased cover or tunnel dishwashers in the past 12 months indicating the maximum use of 3.5 litres per basket are presented. Alternatively, technical datasheets and manuals of the dishwashers purchased indicating the maximum flush can be presented.

4.7 All wastewater is treated. (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint of the establishment, it is important that the wastewater generated by the establishment is not discharged untreated. The establishment can either be connected to an existing public sewage system or have the wastewater treated in its own sewage system.

It is important that all wastewater is treated in accordance with national and/or local legislation. If there is no legislation on the matter, the wastewater is treated according to the most advanced treatment possible for the establishment. After treatment, the treated wastewater is reused, if possible.

In the exceptional cases where authorities do not offer connection to the public sewage system and it is not possible for the establishment to create its own sewage system, the applicant establishment can request a dispensation on the matter.

The reuse/release of wastewater must always be done safely with no adverse effects on the local population and the environment.

During the audit, the licence or other adequate documentation showing compliance with the wastewater treatment requirements is presented. The establishment provides written confirmation from the relevant authority confirming that the release of the treated wastewater does not have adverse effects on the local population and environment. If the applicant establishment is requesting a dispensation from the requirement, it must provide proof showing that it is not possible to comply with the criterion. During the visual inspection, any observations of potential lack of compliance with this criterion are reported.

4.8 Newly purchased dishwashers and laundry machines are not conventional domestic appliances. (I)

Conventional domestic (household) dishwashers and laundry machines are less energy and water efficient compared to professional (industrial) cover and tunnel dishwashers/laundry machines when it comes to large-scale use. To reduce the environmental footprint and save costs, the use of conventional domestic appliances is in general avoided or minimised. Dishwashers and laundry machines purchased within the last 12 months are therefore not conventional domestic appliances.

In the cases where only small dishwashers are needed (e.g. in a bar without need for proper kitchen facilities), it might however be the best solution from an environmental point of view to continue using conventional domestic appliances. Similarly, in the cases where only few items (e.g. uniforms) are washed in the establishment, it might be the best solution from an environmental point of view to use domestic laundry machines. In these cases, the establishment can be exempted from complying with this criterion.

During the audit, documentation is presented showing that dishwashers and laundry machines purchased in the last 12 months are not conventional domestic appliances (unless there is a specific reason for it). During the visual inspection, the use of industrial dishwashers and laundry machines is checked.

4.9 A grease trap is installed. (I)

Well-functioning grease traps in the kitchen contribute to the reduction of the environmental footprint by saving water and chemicals and cut costs. To avoid grease blocking the drains, the establishment must have grease traps in the kitchen, and the grease traps must be emptied regularly.

Establishments without a professional kitchen are exempted from this criterion.

During the audit, the presence of well-functioning grease traps in kitchen drains is checked.

4.10 *Separate water meters are installed in areas with a high degree of water consumption. (G)*

To better trace water consumption from the different parts of the establishment, additional/separate water meters are installed, especially in areas with a high-water consumption (e.g. kitchens, externally managed businesses, etc.). If the establishment is large with many meeting rooms, separate water meters for different parts of the establishment could be installed. Some establishments have chosen to have separate water meters for each room.

Providing more accurate information about water use through additional/separate water meters enables the establishment to prepare better target strategies for the reduction of water consumption and thereby reduce the environmental footprint and cut costs. It also facilitates discovery of leaks.

With more water meters installed, the consumption at each water meter is collected and registered. Ideally the reading of the water consumption from the different meters is done more frequently than once a month, as it will produce more detailed information.

During the audit, the minimum monthly registration of the water consumption from different water meters is presented (including indication of location) as well as the standard operating procedure for investigating and correcting sudden changes in water consumption.

4.11 *Water flow in at least 75% of taps must not exceed 5 litres per minute. (G)*

To reduce the environmental footprint through water savings and also cut costs, the water flow in at least 75% of the taps in the establishment (public areas, including conference areas, and staff areas) does not exceed 5 litres (or 1.32 US gallons) per minute. In some cases, the water flow in the taps could be further reduced without compromising the comfort of the guests. Where the establishment has installed sensors in taps, they must also comply with this criterion.

During the audit, sample measurements of the water flow in a few selected taps in different parts of the establishment are carried out.

4.12 *Wastewater is treated and reused onsite. (G)*

To reduce the environmental footprint and to reduce water consumption, the establishment treats its wastewater onsite and reuses it for different purposes, such as fertiliser for fields, in the green areas of the

establishment or anywhere else appropriate. The reuse of treated wastewater must be done safely, following national legislation with no adverse effects on the local population and environment.

This criterion also includes wastewater derived from the condensation of water in air conditioning systems.

During the audit, documentation about the onsite treatment and reuse of the treated wastewater is presented, and the establishment confirms that the use of the treated wastewater does not adversely affect the local population and the environment (e.g. in the form of a confirmation letter on the matter from the competent local authority).

4.13 Rainwater is collected and used for suitable purposes. (G)

To reduce the environmental footprint through water savings and also cut costs, rainwater is collected and used for toilets, irrigation of the green areas of the establishment or other suitable purposes. The collection of rainwater must be done safely, with no adverse effects on the guests and staff of the establishment, the local population, and the environment.

During the audit, the installations for collecting rainwater are visually inspected, and the establishment confirms that the collected rainwater has no adverse effects on the guests and staff of the establishment, the local population, and the environment (e.g. in the form of a confirmation letter on the matter from the competent local authority).

4.14 The establishment ensures that a water risk assessment is carried out and recommendations from the assessment are taken into consideration. (G)

With the aim of ensuring that water is managed sustainably as a shared resource, the establishment ensures that a water risk assessment is carried out to determine potential water-related risks (such as drought, flooding or water contamination) at the location of the establishment.

The water risk assessment must be carried out by a relevant and suitable authority or external company.

If potential water-related risks are determined in the assessment, the recommendations, in the form of extra care and action, must be taken into consideration in cooperation with other relevant stakeholders. For more information, see [WWF's Water Risk Filter](#).

During the audit, the establishment presents its water risk assessment and documents that the recommendations from the third-party assessment are taken into consideration.

5. Washing and Cleaning

5.1 At least 75% of the chemical cleaning products for daily use have a recognised eco-label. (I)

To lower the environmental footprint, the use of cleaning products containing hazardous chemicals is minimised. The establishment must ensure that at least 75% of all chemical cleaning products for daily use in all parts of the establishment have an internationally or nationally recognised eco-label. This includes the products used for the daily cleaning of the conference areas, restaurants, public areas and staff areas (excluding kitchen and laundry areas).

The recognised eco-labels can be international (e.g. EU-Ecolabel, Nordic Swan, Green Seal, Cradle2Cradle, etc.) or nationally third-party verified eco-labels.

The minimum of 75% eco-labelled products can be calculated referring to the total costs, the number of products or the volume bought.

If it is not possible for an establishment to purchase at least 75% of the chemical cleaning products for daily use with a recognised eco-label on the national market, it can instead consider alternative possible means

of cleaning (see criterion 5.9). If none of the two options are possible, then the establishment can request a dispensation from complying with the requirement.

During the audit, the establishment presents a list of all chemical cleaning products in daily use with an indication of at least 75% of the products having an internationally or nationally recognised eco-label. A spot check during the visual inspection confirms the presence of eco-labels on the daily cleaning products. If the establishment is seeking a dispensation from the requirement, evidence must be presented showing that the establishment has unsuccessfully tried to purchase chemical cleaning products for daily use with a recognised eco-label on the national market and has considered alternative cleaning solutions.

5.2 Disinfection substances must only be used when necessary and in correspondence with the legislation on hygiene. (I)

Chemical disinfection substances are only to be used in cases where insects, fungi, bacteria, or viruses constitute a significant nuisance or health risk, and where the disinfection cannot successfully be replaced by other methods. Hand disinfection is not included in this criterion.

Due to their potential impact on environment and health, the use of disinfection substances is reduced to the minimum, replaced by less harmful substances and/or only used when absolutely needed.

Disinfection substances must be approved by the national authorities and can only be used for the application areas described in the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and/or other technical data sheets. It is compulsory to strictly follow the prescribed concentration and contact time as mentioned in the document. Disinfection can only be applied by trained staff or external contractors licensed for the purpose. It is also important that the establishment ensures correct handling of the disinfection substances (see criterion 6.6).

In case the national authorities do stipulate hygiene regulations that are stricter or in contradiction with this criterion, the establishment follows the official national regulations and is granted a dispensation from this criterion.

During the audit, the establishment presents the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and/or other technical data sheets for the disinfection substances used, as well as the standard operating procedure showing that the use of disinfection substances follows the requirements in the document.

5.3 Paper towels, facial tissues and toilet paper must be made of non-chlorine bleached paper or awarded with an eco-label. (I)

International or national recognised eco-labels for paper towels, facial tissues, and toilet paper (e.g. EU Ecolabel, Nordic Swan, The Blue Angel, FSC or PEFC) are evidence of a smaller environmental footprint through a more environmentally friendly production process.

Alternatively, or in addition, it must be checked if the products are non-chlorine bleached, as chlorine bleaching of cellulose fibres means additional use of energy and chemicals.

The requirement is obligatory for all establishments, but a dispensation can be granted if the products are not available near the establishment.

During the audit, it is checked during the visual inspection that the paper towels, facial tissues and toilet paper purchased are made of non-chlorine bleached paper or awarded with an eco-label.

5.4 *The establishment uses eco-labelled dishwashing detergents. (G)*

The use of dishwashing detergents is kept at a minimum (using the correct dosage), and the products have an internationally or nationally recognised eco-label as these products have a smaller environmental footprint compared to the use of products without an eco-label.

During the audit, it is visually checked that the dishwashing detergents are awarded with an eco-label.

5.5 *The establishment uses eco-labelled laundry detergents. (G)*

The use of laundry detergents is kept at a minimum (using the correct dosage), and the products have an internationally or nationally recognised eco-label as these products have a smaller environmental footprint compared to the use of products without an eco-label.

During the audit, it is visually checked that the laundry detergents are awarded with an eco-label.

5.6 *Concentrated chemical cleaning products and dosing system are used for daily cleaning. (G)*

To reduce the environmental footprint concentrated daily chemical cleaning products are used and diluted on-site to reduce the amount of plastic waste and adverse impacts on the environment due to transportation. The establishment has an automatic dosing (dilution) system to ensure that the correct amount of cleaning products is used. The daily cleaning products should preferably come in closed-loop systems preventing direct contact with the chemicals as well as spills.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing that the daily chemical cleaning products are purchased in concentrated form, and the visual inspection confirms the presence of an automatic dosing system.

5.7 *Fibre cloth made of natural fibres is used for cleaning. (G)*

The use of fibre cloths for cleaning significantly reduces the environmental footprint through a lower consumption of paper, water and detergents (chemicals) and helps cut costs for the establishment. The fibre cloths must be made of natural fibres (instead of synthetic fabrics releasing micro plastic into the water).

During the audit, it is visually checked that fibre cloths made of natural fibres are used for cleaning.

5.8 *Chemical-free cleaning and disinfection methods are used. (G)*

To reduce the environmental footprint and the use of chemical products, the establishment uses chemical-free cleaning and disinfection methods.

The chemical-free cleaning and disinfection methods can include use of deionised water, high-pressure water cleaning, etc.

To comply with this criterion, chemical-free cleaning methods are used to clean surfaces and disinfect in public areas, including conference areas, while kitchens are exempted from this criterion.

In case the national authorities do stipulate hygiene regulations that are stricter or in contradiction with this criterion, the establishment follows the official national regulations and is granted a dispensation from this criterion.

During the audit, the establishment presents its standard operating procedure documenting cleaning and disinfection with chemical-free cleaning methods in public areas and conference areas.

5.9 The establishment does not use fragrance spray and perfume in connection with washing and cleaning. (G)

To reduce the environmental footprint by using fewer chemical substances and to decrease the risks of allergic reactions, the establishment does not use fragrance spray and perfume in washing and cleaning products or in room sprays.

This requirement applies both if the staff of the establishment oversees the washing and cleaning and if the work is outsourced to a third-party contractor.

During the audit, it is visually checked that the products for washing and cleaning do not contain fragrance spray or perfume. Alternatively, the establishment presents a statement from the providers of the washing and cleaning products or the third-party contractor proving that the washing/cleaning products used do not contain fragrance spray or perfume.

6. Waste

6.1 The establishment must separate waste as per national legislation but with a minimum of three categories. (I)

In order to promote the reuse and recycling of waste, the establishment separates the waste as per national (including local) legislation but in a minimum of three categories.

Examples of the types of separated waste are paper, cardboard, metal, cans, glass, plastic, bottles with refund, organic/food waste, garden waste, cooking oil, etc. General waste or other waste is not considered as a category.

Besides the separation of waste, the establishment is encouraged to reduce the amount of waste, e.g. by having agreements with suppliers on the collection and reuse of material used for receiving food and beverage products (see criterion 6.14).

As part of complying with this criterion, the establishment should ensure that as much as possible of the separated waste is recycled/reused either on-site or by the used waste reception facility.

The separated waste is stored safely in compliance with relevant national/local legislation.

The sorting facilities are easily accessible to the staff. Establishments with kitchens should separate waste in the kitchen, if possible.

If there is a written confirmation from national/local authorities guaranteeing that the waste is separated after collection, then the establishment does not need to separate the waste onsite. The staff at the establishment will still need to receive training on waste management principles.

During the audit, the establishment presents a statement (e.g. in the form of a confirmation letter on the matter from the competent local authority) showing that it complies with national and local waste sorting legislation, and the waste sorting facilities (minimum three categories of sorted waste) are inspected during the audit (visual part).

6.2 The separated waste must be handled separately by the local or national waste management facilities, by a private entity or by the establishment's own facilities. (I)

It is important that the establishment ensures that the waste separated into the various categories is also handled separately during and after the pickup as part of subsequent waste handling. The subsequent waste handling includes (where appropriate) further sorting/separation, recycling, and disposal.

For the pick-up and subsequent handling of the separated waste, the establishment can enter an agreement with the local or national waste management authorities and/or with a private company.

The establishment may also have its own facilities for handling some of the separated waste (e.g. composting of organic and garden waste). Furthermore, it is possible that the establishment has facilities to reduce the amount of separated waste before it is sent to the waste management facilities, e.g. in the form of a machine for compressing cardboard.

If the separate waste is handled by a private company or through own facilities, the establishment must provide evidence that the waste treatment is done in an environmentally safe manner and is not harmful to human health.

During the audit, the establishment presents the contract(s) with the public and/or private waste handling entities regarding the correct handling of the waste in separate categories in connection with the pick-up and subsequent treatment. If the establishment has its own facilities for handling separated waste, the standard operating procedure is presented, and the facilities are checked during the visual inspection.

6.3 Instructions on how to separate and handle waste must be readily available to the staff in an understandable and simple format. (I)

The waste sorting area has instructions/signs clearly indicating to the staff how to separate the waste. It is strongly recommended to use icons or illustrations to simplify understanding of the different containers/bins designed for the different types of waste.

During the audit, easily understandable instructions/signs at the waste sorting facilities are visually checked. It is also checked that the instructions are followed (the waste is separated in correct sections).

6.4 Newly purchased pumps and refrigeration plants must not use CFC or HCFC refrigerants. All equipment must always comply with national legislation on phasing out refrigerants. (I)

The energy consuming pumps and refrigeration plants purchased within the last 12 months by the establishment must not contain CFC (chlorofluorocarbon, also called Freon) or HCFC (hydrochlorofluorocarbon) compounds, as these are greenhouse gasses and contribute to ozone depletion.

The information about whether the products contain CFC or HCFC can be found in the product specifications or in the product's information material.

In many countries, legislation no longer allows products containing CFC/HCFC, so it is not possible to buy pumps and refrigeration plants containing these compounds. If the national or local legislation prohibits products containing CFC/HCFC, then the establishment must comply with the legislation on the matter.

In addition, the use of HFCs (hydrofluorocarbon) is also no longer recommended.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation to confirm that pumps and refrigeration plants purchased within the last 12 months do not contain CFC/HCFC.

6.5 Single-use tableware products related to food/beverage must not be used. (I)

To reduce the use of resources and the amount of waste, the establishment is not using single-use tableware products such as cups/glasses, plates and cutlery, straws, coffee stirrer, etc.

Single-use tableware products can only be used in exceptional cases or in line with safety concerns, for example during special events (where it is necessary) or in connection with take-away food/beverages. If the establishment needs to use single-use tableware, we strongly recommend using biodegradable tableware made from paper (without plastic coating), cardboard, wood, corn starch or other plant-based material that contains biodegradable components.

During the audit, the establishment presents its written policy regarding single-use tableware products in line with the requirement, and during the visual inspection it is checked that the establishment follows the written policy on this matter.

6.6 Hazardous solid and liquid chemicals are stored safely. (I)

Hazardous chemicals (including waste), regardless of being in solid or liquid form, are stored safely and with extra care to avoid contamination of the environment and health hazards for the staff.

The separated hazardous chemicals are stored safely in compliance with relevant national/local legislation and according to the recommendations in the Material Safety Data Sheets. It is strongly encouraged that the hazardous chemicals are located in a locked room separated from other waste.

Examples of the types of hazardous chemicals which require to be separated are pesticides, paints, batteries, light bulbs, electronic appliances, cleaning material, and other disinfection substances, etc.

In addition to the safe storage of the hazardous chemicals in separate containers, there is a safe management policy for handling the various hazardous chemicals to avoid potential mixing of drips and spills. The location of the hazardous chemicals must be properly ventilated to avoid a health and safety risk for staff entering the room.

The establishment has a procedure for handling any potential incidents, and the establishment keeps a record of any incidents with information about how any spills have been handled to protect human health and the environment.

In addition to the separation and safe storage of hazardous chemicals, the establishment is encouraged to reduce the amount of these types of chemicals or substitute (when available) products less harmful for the environment.

During the audit, there is a visual inspection of the separate containers for the different types of hazardous solid and liquid chemicals, and it is checked that they are safely stored in a separate room with ventilation and that there are no leaks from the hazardous material containers.

6.7 Hazardous waste must be transported safely to an approved reception facility. (I)

After the establishment has ensured the safe separation and storage of the hazardous solid or liquid waste, it is also important to ensure that such waste is safely transported to a reception facility approved to receive and handle hazardous waste.

Public authorities or private companies approved to deal with transportation of hazardous waste are preferably in charge of the transportation of the hazardous waste to the nearest appropriate reception facility. Alternatively, the establishment may oversee transporting the hazardous waste if this can be done in an environmentally and health-wise safe way complying with national/local regulation for the transportation of hazardous waste.

It is possible for the establishment to cooperate with other establishments on joint transportation of separated hazardous waste if it is done safely and without compromising the subsequent treatment of such waste.

During the audit, the establishment presents a standard operating procedure showing that the establishment ensures that the transportation of the hazardous waste to the nearest appropriate approved reception facility is done safely, complying with national/local regulation.

6.8 Each bathroom has a waste bin. (I)

Each bathroom must have a waste bin, so that hygiene waste is collected instead of being flushed down the toilet and sewage system. In many cases, these and other hygiene products contain plastic and are therefore harmful for the environment.

It is strongly recommended that there is a sign in the bathroom or information in the room/public area indicating that hygiene waste and other similar non-flushable products should be placed in the bathroom waste bin instead of being flushed down the toilet causing blockages and pollution.

During the audit (visual inspection), the presence of a waste bin and relevant sign in the bathroom is checked.

6.9 A maximum of five food/beverage products are in individually packaged single servings. (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint by reducing the amount of waste and also cut costs, the restaurants, staff canteens, bars and other catering services of the establishment have no more than a maximum of five food/beverage products that are in individually packaged single servings.

The food/beverage products include milk/cream, sugar, butter, honey, jam, yoghurt, cheeses, salt/pepper, etc.

It is strongly encouraged to replace all individually packaged single servings, where possible (for example unless differently required by law for hygienic reasons). Instead, the establishment can provide single portions in reusable containers, e.g. in small glasses.

For the types of products that are individually packaged, it is strongly recommended to ensure recycling of the packages.

In case the national authorities stipulate hygiene regulations that are stricter or in contradiction with this criterion, the establishment follows the official national regulations and is granted a dispensation from this criterion.

During the audit (visual inspection), the establishment presents no more than a maximum of five types of food/beverage products that are individually packaged single servings.

6.10 The establishment registers the total amount of waste. (I)

It is important to know the amount of waste so that the establishment can have a plan to reduce its environmental footprint through reducing, recycling and/or reusing waste and thereby cut costs.

The establishment, therefore, has a monthly registration of the amount of waste, preferably separated into the various categories of waste.

During the audit, the establishment presents the overview of the monthly amount of waste collected, preferably per category.

6.11 Toiletries such as soap, shampoo and shower gel are provided in dispensers. (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint by reducing the amount of waste, the establishment uses dispensers instead of individually packaged travel-sized containers for toiletries such as soap, shampoo, and shower gel.

This applies to the bathrooms in public areas (including conference areas) and toilets/showers in staff areas.

If the dispensers are refilled, they must be properly cleaned on a regular basis.

In case the national authorities stipulate hygiene regulations that are in contradiction with this criterion, the establishment must follow the official national regulations and will be granted a dispensation from this criterion.

During the audit (visual inspection), the presence of dispensers is checked.

6.12 At least five types of products are delivered in reusable packaging that is returned to the supplier. (G)

The amount of waste produced by the establishment can be further reduced by making agreements with various suppliers to deliver goods in packaging material that can be returned and reused (e.g. plastic cans, expanded polystyrene boxes, plastic boxes, etc.).

In order for an establishment to comply with this criterion, a minimum of five types of products must be delivered in packaging material that can be returned and reused. If an establishment receives fewer than five types of products in total and they are all delivered in reusable packaging, they also comply with this criterion.

During the audit, the establishment presents the agreements with suppliers regarding the collection and reuse of packaging material for a minimum of five types of products.

6.13 The establishment has a waste plan in place to reduce and/or reuse waste. (G)

When aware of the exact amount of the different types of separated waste, the establishment has a plan to reduce the environmental footprint through decreasing, recycling and/or reusing waste, thus also cutting costs. The aim is to drastically reduce/eliminate waste.

Recording the amount of waste in the different categories is used to formulate a waste management plan on how to reduce, recycle and/or reuse the amount of received waste in these categories.

During the audit, the establishment presents a written waste management plan on how to reduce, recycle and/or reuse its waste.

6.14 Guests and staff are able to separate waste into categories that can be handled by the waste management facilities. (G)

To create awareness among guests and staff on waste separation and recycling, the establishment offers the possibility for guests and staff to separate their waste. The separated waste is collected and placed in the overall waste bins for the separate categories in the waste management facility.

The separate waste bins for guests should be placed in the public areas (lobby, restaurant, conference areas, parking areas, etc.). The waste bins for staff can be placed in the staff canteen, changing rooms etc.

The waste separation can be done through separate bins for different waste types or one bin with separation for different waste types. It is very important that there are clear instructions/signs (preferably icons or illustrations) indicating the different bins/compartments for the different types of waste. General/mixed/other waste is not considered a waste fraction.

The information for guests about waste sorting possibilities is included in the information about the environmental undertakings of the establishment (through binders, TV-monitors or via other information sources in public areas or conference areas, etc.).

The establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear, and easily understandable information as part of joining the Green Key programme.

During the audit (visual inspection), the waste separation system (with easily understood information) for guests and staff is shown.

6.15 At least 75% of the soap, shower gel and shampoo have a nationally or internationally recognised eco-label. (G)

To reduce the environmental footprint by decreasing the amount of chemicals used, at least 75% of the soap, shower gel and shampoo used the establishment has a nationally or internationally recognised eco-

label. In addition to having an eco-label, it is also encouraged that the soap, shower gel and shampoo have a “cruelty-free” label (meaning that they are not tested on animals). This applies to bathrooms in public areas (including conference areas) as well as staff areas.

During the audit, the establishment either presents its purchasing policy and/or the visual inspection confirms compliance, with at least 75% of the soap, shower gel and shampoo having a nationally or internationally recognised eco-label.

6.16 At least five purchased products are either not packaged in plastic or packaged in plastic containing at least 50% recycled plastic. (G)

To lower the environmental footprint by reducing the amount of waste, the establishment purchases products that are not packaged in plastic. If the product is packaged in plastic, it should contain at least 50% recycled plastic. After use, the product packaging should be recycled again.

To comply with this criterion, at least five products (e.g. cleaning products, toiletries, wrapping of food products etc.) must either not be packaged in plastic or be packaged in plastic containing at least 50% recycled plastic.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation that at least five products are not packaged in plastic or packaged in plastic containing at least 50% recycled plastic.

6.17 Organic waste is composted or used for other purposes. (G)

To reuse waste from organic sources (food scraps and/or garden waste) and thereby reduce the environmental footprint, the establishment has a system for separating its organic waste. The organic waste can subsequently be composted or used for other purposes such as biogas production or food for animals.

If the organic waste is composted, it is important that it is done hygienically without affecting the guests, staff, and surrounding community.

During the audit (visual inspection), the establishment shows the compost pile or container for organic waste. If the compost is collected by an external company for biogas, animal food or other purposes, the establishment provides documentation showing that the organic waste is treated by the external company.

7. Energy

7.1 Energy use must be registered at least once a month. (I)

In order for the establishment to reduce its environmental footprint by decreasing its energy consumption and also cut costs, the establishment records its total energy consumption at least once a month. If available, the sources of the energy consumption are indicated.

It is encouraged to record the total energy consumption more frequently than once a month, as it will produce more detailed information.

The data should be analysed and used actively with the goal of reducing energy consumption. Should any major changes in energy consumption occur (especially in the form of a greater consumption than expected), the establishment has procedures in place to immediately investigate the reason for this difference and to implement corrective actions.

During the audit, the minimum of monthly registration of the total energy consumption is presented, as well as information about the standard operating procedure for investigating and potentially correcting sudden and/or major changes in the total energy consumption.

7.2 Heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning control systems must be in place. (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint by lowering energy use and to cut costs, the establishment must have a system in place to control the heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) in the establishment.

It can be a centralised automatic or manual computerised system (building management system) for changing or switching off the HVAC system. It can also be a system for manual adjustment of the HVAC in the different parts of the establishment described in the standard operating procedures for the staff. In addition, regulation through keeping curtains and shades closed could also be considered.

The control system considers the changes of season and the use or non-use of the different parts of the establishment (conference facilities, restaurant areas, other public areas, etc.).

During the audit, the establishment demonstrates the building management system and/or presents the standard operating procedure showing that the HVAC control system is in place.

7.3 At least 75% of all light bulbs are energy efficient and at least 50% of all light bulbs are LED bulbs. (I)

As light bulbs account for a significant part of energy consumption, the establishment, in order to reduce the environmental footprint, ensures that at least 75% of all its light bulbs are energy efficient corresponding to one of the two most energy efficient classes in the EU energy label system or EnergyStar rating. The requirement applies to public areas (including lobby, restaurants, conference area, halls, etc.) and the staff areas.

The most energy efficient and, therefore, preferred light bulbs are LED bulbs, but other energy-efficient light bulbs (compact fluorescent lighting, CFL) can also be used. A minimum of 50% of all light bulbs must be LED. If other energy-efficient light bulbs have been purchased within the last three years, the establishment can get a dispensation from having a minimum of 50% LED light bulbs.

Energy efficient light bulbs are, in most cases, more expensive than non-energy efficient ones, but, in addition to efficiency, these bulbs last much longer and do not need replacement as often as non-energy efficient ones. This reduces the costs in the long run, and it also reduces the working time spent on replacing bulbs.

During the audit, the establishment presents the overview of all light bulbs, demonstrating that at least 75% of the light bulbs in the establishment are energy efficient, and at least 50% of them are LED. During the visual inspection, the energy efficient light bulbs in a few selected conference rooms, other public areas and staff areas are checked.

7.4 Grease filters in the exhaust must be cleaned at least once a year. (I)

The exhausts in the kitchen consume more energy if the grease filters are not cleaned regularly. To reduce the environmental footprint, it is, therefore, required that the grease filters in the exhausts are cleaned at least once a year but preferably more often.

During the audit, the establishment presents the standard operating procedure for cleaning the grease filters at least once a year (including information about the last date the grease filters were cleaned).

7.5 The heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system must be checked at least once a year and maintained, if necessary, in order to be energy efficient at all times. (I)

For the overall heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system to be energy efficient, thus reducing the environmental footprint and cutting costs, it is checked at least once a year.

It is strongly encouraged that the HVAC system is checked by an external energy company, but it can also be controlled internally, e.g. by the chief engineer of the establishment. The check includes the filters of the HVAC system.

If the check of the HVAC system reveals the need for maintenance (cleaning or repair), the establishment must ensure this is done. It is strongly encouraged that any repairs are done immediately, but, if that is not possible, the repair of the HVAC system must be ensured within 1-2 months from the check revealing the need for repair.

During the audit, the establishment presents the standard operating procedure for external or internal checking of the HVAC system. Information about the date when the latest check of the HVAC system took place (within the last 12 months), and the outcome of the check (including data about any repairs done) is provided as well.

7.6 Refrigerators, cold stores, heating cupboards and ovens must be equipped with intact door seals. (I)

The energy consumption of refrigerators, cold (or freezing) stores, heating cupboards and ovens increases if the units do not possess intact door seals. The door seals can be e.g. rubber seals around the doors of the devices.

The door seals can suffer from wear and tear as time goes by. It is therefore necessary that the door seals of the devices be examined at least once a year, but preferably more frequently. Should the check reveal that the door seals are no longer intact, it is necessary that the establishment immediately ensures repair/replacement of the faulty door seals.

During the audit, the establishment presents the standard operating procedure for checking the door seals at least once a year and repair/exchange when necessary. The visual inspection includes a spot check that door seals are intact in selected refrigerators, cold (or freezing) stores, heating cupboards and ovens.

7.7 Freezing equipment must be regularly defrosted (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint through decreasing energy consumption and to cut costs, the freezing equipment/devices in the kitchen are regularly defrosted so that they do not contain excess ice, which adversely affects their proper function.

It is strongly recommended that the devices are defrosted at least once a year, but preferably more frequently. If the freezing equipment has an automatic auto-defrost function, it complies with this criterion.

During the audit, the establishment presents the standard operating procedure for defrosting the freezing devices at least once a year. The visual inspection includes a spot check of the amount of ice in the freezing devices.

7.8 There is a written procedure regarding energy in empty meeting rooms. (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint by minimising the energy consumption and also to cut costs, the establishment has a procedure regarding energy in empty meeting rooms.

There are two aspects in relation to the policy: a) standard operating procedure regarding energy in meeting rooms empty for 1-2 days, and b) a written policy regarding energy in meeting rooms during periods of low use.

The standard operating procedure includes a plan on how to reduce energy in the case of guest or meeting rooms not being used for short periods of time. It can for instance be in the form of the stand-by function of the TV being turned off.

For a longer period of occupancy below 75%, the establishment has a written policy regarding additional energy savings. This written policy considers energy saving by turning off all electrical devices in the meeting rooms. The written policy preferably includes that a certain part of the establishment is closed during periods of low occupancy.

During the audit, the establishment presents the standard operating procedure regarding energy use in meeting rooms empty for short periods of time, and also presents its written policy regarding energy use if occupancy falls below 75%.

7.9 The establishment has set a standard temperature for cooling and heating in rooms. (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint through keeping the best possible control over the energy consumption, and to cut costs, the establishment has a set standard temperature for cooling and heating in rooms (especially meeting rooms).

If the outside temperature is higher than 22°C (72°F), then the standard cooling temperature in the room should be set at minimum 22°C (72°F). If the outside temperature is lower than 22°C (72°F), then the standard heating temperature in the room should be set at maximum 22°C (72°F).

The standard temperature can be set automatically from a central system or manually in each room.

It will still be potentially possible for guests in the meeting rooms to have the standard temperature changed manually or via contacting reception. It is encouraged that guests can only change the standard temperature by three degrees at most.

During the audit, the establishment presents its standard operating procedure for setting the standard temperature for cooling and heating in meeting rooms, and during the visual inspection it will be checked that selected rooms have the standard set temperature.

7.10 Outside lighting is minimised and/or has automatic turn off sensors installed. (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint and cut costs, the establishment has a system in place for the reduction of energy consumption of outside lighting.

The outside lighting system must be turned off during daytime/natural light hours. There are also other ways of minimising outside lighting energy use, either by having the lighting automatically turned off in certain periods of the night or by installing sensors that turn on lighting when detecting movement. Different lighting systems may be applied to outside areas serving different purposes. The establishment must always comply with local/national safety regulations concerning lighting.

During the audit (visual inspection), the locations of sensors and timers switched off during daytime are checked.

7.11 *The establishment uses or purchases at least 50% renewable and/or eco-labelled electricity.* (G)

In order to encourage the establishment to choose the most environmentally friendly and sustainable type of electricity, it must use electricity from renewable sources (solar panel, wind power, biomass, biogas from organic waste, hydroelectric or geothermal heat, etc.). Nuclear energy is not considered a renewable source because of the generated nuclear waste.

The renewable electricity can be produced onsite or from an external source that is preferably nearby.

The establishment is strongly encouraged to ensure that all its electricity consumption derives from renewable sources, but to comply with this criterion, at least 50% of the electricity consumption in the establishment must derive from renewable sources.

If available, the establishment is also encouraged to consider purchasing eco-labelled electricity. This means that the electricity is not only renewable, but the eco-labelling also ensures that it is third-party verified and fulfils additional sustainability criteria, e.g. taking biodiversity into account, financing projects that combat electricity poverty, new clean electricity projects, etc. Examples of electricity eco-labels are EKOenergy, Green-e, Bra Miljöval, etc.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing that the establishment uses at least 50% electricity that is generated from renewable sources and/or purchased as eco-labelled electricity.

7.12 The establishment uses or purchases 100% renewable and/or eco-labelled electricity. (G)

In order to encourage the establishment to choose the most environmentally friendly and sustainable type of electricity, it must use electricity from renewable sources (solar panel, wind power, biomass, biogas from organic waste, hydroelectric or geothermal heat, etc.). Nuclear energy is not considered a renewable source because of the generated nuclear waste.

The renewable electricity can be produced onsite or from an external source that is preferably nearby.

To comply with this criterion, all (100%) of the electricity consumption in the establishment derives from renewable sources.

If available, the establishment is also encouraged to consider purchasing eco-labelled electricity. This means that the electricity is not only renewable, but the eco-certification also ensures that it is third-party verified and fulfils additional sustainability criteria, e.g. taking biodiversity into account, financing projects that combat electricity poverty, new clean electricity projects, etc. Examples of electricity eco-labels are EKOenergy, Green-e, Bra Miljöval, etc.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing that all (100%) of the electricity used by the establishment is generated from renewable sources and/or purchased as eco-labelled electricity.

7.13 The establishment does not use fossil fuels for the heating/cooling of the establishment. (G)

To reduce the environmental footprint and decrease the carbon emission of the establishment, it does not use energy from fossil fuels (oil, gas, petroleum, or coal) for the heating/cooling in the establishment. Besides the heating/cooling of the establishment itself, this also applies to the production of hot water and to cooking.

The alternatives to energy consumption derived from fossil fuels and nuclear energy include the use of electricity-driven heat pumps powered by renewable energy, the connection to district heating or cooling network systems derived from renewable sources, the use of boilers driven by solar, wind or geothermal energy, energy-efficient wood-burning stoves, etc.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation verifying that the establishment only uses alternatives to fossil fuels for the heating/cooling of the establishment.

7.14 At least 75% of all windows are energy efficient at a higher standard than the national/local regulation. (G)

Windows can be a significant contributor to increased energy consumption in the establishment. To lower the environmental footprint, establishments located in areas with a cold climate must, therefore, ensure a high degree of thermal insulation (e.g. double or triple glazing), and establishments in areas with a hot climate should have windows that are energy efficient in other ways (e.g. sun-reflecting material on the windows, blinds or other types of shade, etc.). Furthermore, in areas with a very hot or cold climate, the establishment could also have restrictions on the ability to open windows.

To comply with this criterion, there must be initiatives ensuring higher standards than those set by national/local regulations regarding insulation and other energy efficient initiatives.

To comply with this criterion, at least 75% of the windows in the establishment have the appropriate thermal insulation, or other energy efficient initiatives are in place with higher standards than those set by national/local regulations.

During the audit, the establishment presents a document (for example from an external verification agent) outlining its system for having an appropriately high degree of thermal insulation or other energy efficient initiatives with higher standards than those set by national/local regulations depending on climate, in at least 75% of the windows in the establishment.

7.15 Newly purchased electric devices in the establishment are energy efficient. (G)

To decrease the environmental footprint through lower energy consumption and also cut costs, the establishment ensures that all the electric devices purchased within the past 12 months have an eco-label or are energy efficient.

In the kitchen, such devices can be energy efficient ovens, steamers, boilers, hoods, refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, toasters, ice machines, generators, etc. In the offices and reception, they can be computers, printers, photocopiers, etc. In the washing area, they can be laundry and drying machines, etc. In the housekeeping section, they can be vacuum cleaners, steam cleaners, etc. In the public areas, they can be energy efficient elevators.

To ensure that the devices are energy efficient, they should hold an internationally or nationally recognised eco-label or a high-energy efficiency rating, e.g. one of the two most energy efficient classes in the EU energy label system or EnergyStar rating, etc.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing that all electric devices purchased within the last 12 months have a recognised eco-label or have a high energy efficiency rating.

7.16 An external energy audit is carried out at least once every five years. (G)

To have a better overview of the areas with high energy consumption and areas of potential energy (and cost) savings in the establishment, it must have an external energy audit carried out at least once every five years. The energy audit should aim at reducing the overall amount of energy consumed in the establishment as well as increasing the percentage of renewable energy sources used.

The energy audit is carried out by an external professional energy consultant or a professional advisor from the local or national authorities.

The energy audit identifies the areas with significant energy consumption in the establishment. It also includes advice and an action plan with suggestions for reduction in energy consumption in the establishment, including the effects, the costs, and the return on investment of such interventions.

During the audit, the establishment presents the report from the energy audit carried out within the last five years.

7.17 The establishment has an internationally or nationally recognised green building rating system. (G)

To reduce the environmental footprint through saving of energy (and reduce costs), the establishment holds an internationally recognised green building rating system, such as the LEED or BREEAM certification, or other similar national rating systems, etc.

During the audit, the establishment presents the verification that it has achieved by a third-party internationally or nationally recognised green building rating system.

7.18 The establishment has an automatic system that turns off the lights and electrical appliances when leaving the meeting room. (G)

To reduce the environmental footprint through lowering the energy consumption and also cut costs, the establishment must have a system in place that ensures that lights and electrical appliances are turned off when guests leave the meeting room.

The most common system is the “key card” system, where the electricity is shut off immediately or within 1-2 minutes after the key card is taken out of the holder. In these cases, it is important that the establishment does not provide more key cards than needed and does not encourage the guests to keep an extra card in the holder when leaving the room.

Other automatic systems include occupancy sensors, or motion/body heat detectors that recognise when guests leave the room and automatically switch off lights and electrical appliances.

Manual systems, such as a master switch that turns off all electricity in the room, are not included in this criterion.

During the audit (visual inspection), the presence of an automatic system/key card turning off light and electric appliances is checked.

7.19 At least 75% of the lighting in public areas and staff areas has motion detectors or is reduced when people are not present. (G)

To reduce the environmental footprint through decreasing the energy consumption and thereby cut costs, the establishment has motion detectors or timers in public areas and staff areas, wherever safe to do so, enabling lights to be turned off when people are not present.

An alternative solution is that the lighting in public areas is dimmed or the amount of lighting is reduced when people are not present.

To comply with this criterion, at least 75% of lighting in public areas and staff areas in the establishment has motion detector sensors or dimmed/reduced lighting when people are not present.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation about the presence of motion detectors or dimmed/reduced lighting in at least 75% of all public and staff areas, and the presence of the motion detectors in these areas is checked during the visual inspection (where possible).

7.20 Separate electricity and gas meters are installed at strategically important places for energy monitoring. (G)

To better trace the energy consumption from different parts of the establishment, additional/separate electricity and gas meters are installed, especially in areas with high degrees of energy consumption (e.g. kitchens, externally managed businesses, etc.). In cases where the establishment has many meeting rooms, separate electricity, and gas meters for different parts of the establishment could be installed. Some establishments have chosen to have separate electricity meters for each room.

Providing more accurate information through additional/separate electricity and gas meters about the different levels of energy use in the establishment enables it to prepare better target strategies for reduction in energy consumption.

If more electricity and gas meters are installed, it is necessary that the consumption data from each meter is collected and registered. If the readings from the different meters can be collected more frequently than once a month, it produces more detailed information about the consumption.

During the audit, a minimum of monthly registration of the electricity and gas consumption from the different meters is presented.

7.21 Air-conditioning, ventilation, and heating automatically switch off in at least 75% of the rooms when windows and doors are open. (G)

A significant amount of energy from heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems is wasted if they are in use while windows and doors are open. The HVAC system will then have to use additional energy to adjust the temperature to the set level.

The HVAC system in guest and meeting rooms therefore automatically switches off when windows and doors are opened.

To comply with this criterion, the system is installed in a minimum of 75% of the meeting rooms.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation (e.g. technical specifications and overview of all areas in compliance and technical specifications), showing that a minimum of 75% of the meeting rooms have the HVAC system automatically switching off when the windows and doors are opened. The visual inspection confirms that the HVAC system switches off when windows and doors are open.

7.22 A heat recovery system for e.g. refrigeration systems, ventilators, or sanitary wastewater is installed. (G)

Large energy consuming machines and equipment often produce excess heat. To reduce the environmental footprint through reducing energy consumption in the establishment, heat recovery systems must be in place for the large energy consuming machines/equipment, e.g. the heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system, refrigeration systems, or the wastewater treatment system. The heat from the recovery system is then used in other areas, such as heating in indoor parking areas, etc.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation (e.g. technical specifications) showing the presence of the heat recovery system within its premises.

7.23 The establishment offers access to charge electric vehicles. (G)

To lower its environmental footprint, the establishment offers access to charge electric vehicles. Consideration should be given to ensuring that the chargers can be used by multiple car brands.

The charging stations can be located within the establishment or at a maximum 200 metres' distance from it. If the charging stations are externally managed, it is important that guests visiting the establishment can use the charging station.

The charging stations can be used both by the guests of the establishment and by the staff (see criterion 13.9).

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear, and easily understandable information. The establishment does not promise more than it can deliver.

During the audit (visual inspection), the presence of the electric vehicle charging station is checked.

7.24 The establishment does not use or only uses environmentally friendly outdoor heating or air-conditioning appliances. (G)

Where the establishment has outdoor areas, e.g. a restaurant/café or outdoor smoking area, the establishment does not use outdoor heating/air-conditioning appliances or only uses environmentally friendly outdoor heating or air-conditioning appliances. This is considered to reduce the environmental footprint through energy savings and to also cut costs.

For outdoor heating and air-conditioning appliances to be environmentally friendly, the appliances use electricity (instead of gas) as their energy source. Infrared electric heaters are preferred over reflector heaters as infrared heaters emit a precise beam of heat that warms up persons without heating up the surrounding air. It is recommended that the electric devices have a high-energy efficiency rating (e.g. one of the two most energy efficient classes in the EU energy label system higher or EnergyStar rating). Heating appliances using wood as source are also accepted.

It is recommended that the location of the heaters/coolers is considered in relation to chairs, shelter from wind, location of the sun, proximity to buildings and solid ground, etc. The establishment can offer blankets as a replacement for, or supplement to the heating appliances. The establishment is also encouraged to consider the time that the heating/air-conditioning appliances are in use (e.g. have a timer or sensors activating the appliances).

During the audit, the visual inspection confirms that the establishment either does not use outdoor electric heating/air-conditioning appliances or only uses environmentally friendly (electric) heating/air-conditioning appliances.

8. Food and Beverage

8.1 The establishment must purchase and register at least five types of food/beverage products that are organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade labelled and/or locally produced. (I)

Environmentally friendly and sustainable practices in the establishment are demonstrated by the type of food and beverage it purchases and offers to the guests.

The establishment therefore purchases food and beverage products that are organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade labelled and/or locally produced. These products should preferably be used in significant quantities or daily. The organic, eco-labelled or fair-trade products are certified by national or international authorities.

Products are, whenever possible, produced locally to reduce the environmental footprint through reduced transportation, and to stimulate the local economy. Products produced less than 100 km from the establishment are normally considered as locally produced. Products grown at the premises or wild-caught/picked within 100 km from the establishment also comply with the criterion.

The establishment ensures that as many of its food and beverage products as possible are organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade labelled and/or locally produced. The choice of products depends on availability and price. To comply with this criterion, a minimum of five products is required, but it is strongly recommended to include more products. Furthermore, the percentage of organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade and/or locally produced food/beverage products should normally be increased every year.

Although this criterion mainly relates to food/beverage products offered to guests, it is also recommended to implement this criterion in the staff canteen.

During the audit, the establishment presents a list of a minimum of five food/beverage products that are organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade labelled and/or locally produced. During the audit, the food/beverage products complying with this criterion are checked.

8.2 The establishment does not buy products derived from threatened or protected species. (I)

As part of the purchase policy, the establishment does not buy meat, fish, or seafood products derived from threatened or protected species.

To check the status of the species, it is recommended to use the [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#) or the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) Appendices. Species that are labelled as vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered must not be purchased. To check the status of

fish and seafood, it is recommended to make use of a (local) fish and seafood guide and species with a 'red' rating should be avoided.

Furthermore, recognised eco-labels like the MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) for wild caught fish and seafood, the ASC (Aquaculture Stewardship Council) for farmed fish and seafood, the GGN label (Certified Responsible Farming & Transparency) or the BAP (Best Aquaculture Practices) for certified aquaculture can help to identify products that are not derived from and do not contain threatened species.

If the establishment offers wild game meat, it must derive from sustainable sources, such as well-managed sustainable hunting and game ranching operations following national legislation.

During the audit, the establishment presents its written policy confirming that it does not buy products from threatened species and how that is being ensured, e.g. through a confirmation or certification (if applicable) from the supplier. The visual inspection of the menu confirms the compliance.

8.3 A vegetarian/vegan alternative menu is offered in the restaurant. (I)

As vegetarian/vegan food has a smaller environmental footprint than meat-based food, the establishment must have one or more vegetarian and/or vegan alternatives included in the restaurant menu. This criterion also addresses the growing demand by guests for vegetarian alternatives to the regular meat-based menus.

The vegetarian/vegan options are clearly indicated on the menu or by indications in the buffet. The indication is done by using icons or other easily understood means of communication.

Establishments only offering one fixed menu are exempted from complying with this criterion.

Although this criterion mainly relates to food products for the guests, the establishment is also encouraged to implement this criterion in the staff canteen.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear and easily understandable information.

During the audit, the visual inspection confirms the indication of vegetarian/vegan options on the menu and/or buffet.

8.4 The establishment takes initiatives to reduce the level of food waste. (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint by minimising the quantity of food waste, reduce the amount of unnecessary food purchased and to cut costs, the establishment prepares a plan for reducing food waste.

The plan should consider a range of issues:

- Can the quantities and types of food be adjusted?
- Can the plates be of a smaller size?
- Can the establishment offer half portions at a lower price?
- Can the food be stored and served in a better way to last longer?
- Are all the ingredients used to the largest possible extent?
- Can serving be changed from buffets (that are continuously filled up) to portions?
- In case of buffets, can there be an encouragement to guests not to overload the plates?
- How can food that is left be reused or donated?

It is strongly encouraged that guests are informed about and involved in the ambition of reducing food waste, e.g. by information signs or by being offered leftover food in a doggy bag, where possible.

To comply with this criterion, the plan must be supplemented with actions on the matter.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing its plan for reducing food waste and the actions carried out or to be undertaken, and the visual inspection confirms the actions, where possible.

8.5 Where the water quality is of an adequate standard, tap water is offered and/or promoted to guests. (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint created by the process of producing bottled water (including the transportation of the water, the use of plastic, aluminium or glass for the bottles and the subsequent transportation of bottled water to the customers), the establishment offers tap water to guests with an encouragement to drink it.

The possibility for offering tap water depends on its quality in the respective area and the tap water supply in the establishment. If the local tap water is not drinkable due to smell or taste, or if the quality of the tap water in the establishment does not comply with national standards for tap water (e.g. relating to levels of pesticides, heavy metals, etc.), then this criterion is not applicable.

In case the national authorities stipulate that hygiene regulations are in contradiction with this criterion, the establishment must follow the official national regulations.

If the quality of the tap water allows it to be offered, it can be offered as it is or it can be filtered before being served. The tap water is preferably offered as still water, but it could also be offered as sparkling water after adding carbonic acid. In addition, the establishment is encouraged to inform its guests about the possibility of drinking the tap water.

The tap water is offered to guests in restaurants and meeting rooms, but it could also be offered to guests at the reception, etc., and it could also be offered to staff in staff areas.

During the audit, the visual inspection confirms that tap water is offered and promoted.

8.6 The establishment registers the amount of food waste. (G)

To reduce the environmental footprint by minimising the amount of food waste and also cut costs, the establishment registers the amount of food waste.

The amount can be divided into different categories, such as different offerings (buffet, menu, etc.), different meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, etc.), different parts of the meals (starter, main course, dessert, etc.), different types of food (bread, salad, etc.), food that is used versus food scraps, etc. The division into different categories depends on the different types of meals offered in the establishment.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing its registration of food waste in different categories.

8.7 The establishment indicates on the menu or in the buffet the products that are organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade labelled and/or locally produced. (G)

To increase guest awareness about organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade labelled and/or locally produced food, the establishment clearly indicates which products are organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade labelled and/or produced from local sources. This could be done on the menu or by signs on the buffet.

The indication is done by using icons or other easily understood means of communication.

It is recommended that fish/meat products always state the origin of the product.

Although this criterion mainly relates to food/beverage products for the guests, it is also encouraged to implement this criterion in the staff canteen.

It is important that the indication is always in accordance with the certification body and national legislation.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear, and easily understandable information about the food and beverage products.

During the audit, the visual inspection confirms the indication of organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade labelled and/or locally produced food and beverage products on the menu and/or buffet.

8.8 At least 25% of the main dishes in the establishment are vegetarian. (G)

To reduce the environmental footprint of the establishment, 25% of all offered main dishes are vegetarian. It is recommended that the same applies for the starters.

Although this criterion mainly relates to the dishes prepared for the guests, it is also encouraged to implement this criterion in the staff canteen.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear, and easily understandable information on the offered vegetarian dishes.

During the audit, the visual inspection confirms the presence of at least 25% vegetarian main dishes.

8.9 The establishment offers a vegan main dish. (G)

As vegan food has a smaller environmental footprint than meat-based and dairy-based food, the establishment must have one or more vegan options. This criterion also addresses the growing demand by guests for alternatives to the regular meat-based and dairy-based menus. To comply with this criterion, at least one main dish must be vegan, but it is also recommended that it applies to starters, buffets and/or breakfasts.

The vegan options are clearly indicated on the menu or by signs on the buffet. The indication is done by using icons or other easily understood means of communication.

Although this criterion mainly relates to food products for the guests, it is also encouraged to implement it in the staff canteen.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear, and easily understandable information.

During the audit, the visual inspection confirms the indication of vegan options on the menu and/or buffet.

8.10 At least 50% of all food/beverage products used in the establishment are organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade labelled and/or locally produced. (G)

Environmentally friendly and sustainable practices in the establishment are demonstrated by the types of food and beverage purchased by the establishment and offered to the guests.

The establishment therefore registers the food and beverage products purchased that are organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade labelled and/or locally produced. The organic, eco-labelled or fair-trade products are recognised by national or international authorities. Products are, whenever possible, produced locally to reduce the environmental footprint from transportation and to stimulate the local economy. Products produced less than 100 km from the establishment are normally considered as locally produced. Products grown at the premises or wild-caught/picked within 100 km from the establishment also comply with the criterion.

To comply with this criterion, the establishment prepares a list of all its food/beverage products with each relevant product being marked as organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade labelled and/or locally produced, showing that at least 50% of all food/beverage products comply with the requirement. The establishment can also alternatively provide verification from an external entity confirming compliance with the requirement.

During the audit, the establishment presents a list of all its food/beverage products with the specification of each relevant product being organic, eco-labelled, fair-trade labelled and/or locally produced showing that at least 50% of the food/beverage products comply with the requirement. The establishment can also alternatively provide verification from an external entity confirming compliance with the requirement.

8.11 The establishment only purchases meat and seafood products that are certified with a sustainability label. (G)

To reduce the environmental footprint of the establishment caused by its purchase of meat and seafood products and to protect the global and local biodiversity, it only purchases and processes products that are certified with a sustainability label.

This includes organic products as well as products from sustainable production or harvest and considering animal welfare as well. Respective labels include for example the EU-Ecolabel or other national organic labels, eco-labels like the MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) for wild caught fish and seafood, the ASC (Aquaculture Stewardship Council) for farmed fish and seafood, the GGN label (Certified Responsible Farming & Transparency) or the BAP (Best Aquaculture Practices) for certified aquaculture.

To comply with this criterion, the establishment has to prove that 100% of its purchased meat and seafood products comply with this criterion.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation proving that its purchased meat and seafood products comply with this requirement, and during the visual inspection a spot check verifies compliance.

9. Indoor Environment

9.1 The restaurant and all public areas must be non-smoking or have areas designated for smoking. (I)

To reduce health risk and the annoyance from smoking, the restaurant and all public areas of the establishment are non-smoking.

In countries where this is not feasible, there are areas designated for smoking that comprise less than half of the total restaurant and public area. The non-smoking section is clearly physically separated from the smoking section, so that persons sitting in the non-smoking section are not affected by the smokers. The non-smoking and smoking sections are marked clearly with signs in an easily understandable way.

Many countries have legislation regulating smoking in restaurants and public areas. Where there is such legislation, the establishment must under all circumstances comply with its requirements.

During the audit, the visual inspection confirms that smoking is not allowed in the restaurant and all public areas or that there is a physical separation and signs indicating the smoking and non-smoking parts of the restaurant and public areas.

9.2 A minimum of 75% of the rooms must be non-smoking. (I)

To reduce the health risk and the annoyance from smoking, all meeting rooms are preferably non-smoking rooms.

In countries where this is not feasible, a minimum of 75% of the rooms are non-smoking. The sections of the establishment with non-smoking meeting rooms are clearly separated from those rooms where smoking is allowed. The rooms where smoking is allowed can, for instance, be located on separate floors or wings of the establishment. The areas with non-smoking and smoking meeting rooms are clearly marked with signs in an easily understandable way.

Many countries have legislation regulating smoking in meeting rooms. Where there is such legislation, the establishment must in all circumstances comply with its requirements.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation (e.g. an overview) showing that at least 75% of the meeting rooms are non-smoking, and the establishment confirms that it complies with national/local smoking regulations. The visual inspection confirms that the areas with smoking and non-smoking meeting

rooms are clearly separated and there are signs indicating the smoking and non-smoking parts of the establishment.

9.3 The establishment has a personnel policy concerning smoking during working hours. (I)

To reduce the health risk and the annoyance from smoking, the areas for the public and the staff are preferably non-smoking areas.

If staff smoking is allowed, the establishment has a policy for the staff regarding smoking during working hours. The policy includes regulations about when and where the staff can smoke. It is important that the policy ensures that non-smoking staff members and guests are not affected by smoking.

Many countries have legislation regulating smoking in public and staff areas. Where there is legislation on the issue, the establishment must in all circumstances comply with its requirements.

During the audit, the establishment presents its written smoking policy for staff, including information about when and where smoking during working hours is allowed, and how the establishment ensures that it does not constitute a health risk and annoyance for non-smoking staff members and guests.

9.4 Indoor air quality in the establishment is regularly monitored. (G)

For the continuous improvement of the indoor environment and the well-being of staff and guests, the indoor air quality in the establishment is regularly monitored.

Air quality can be measured as the number of air exchanges per hour, the temperature and humidity and/or the amount of radon, mould, nitrogen oxides (NO_x), carbon dioxide (CO₂) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the air.

The monitored values must not exceed limits specified by national or international standards. If the limit values are exceeded, responsive actions must be taken to comply with the requirements. The responsive actions could include ventilating the rooms by opening windows on a regular basis, changing the settings of the ventilation, installation of air purifiers or sanitation devices.

To comply with this criterion, a regular monitoring system (minimum monitoring once a year) must be installed in at least two parts of the establishment.

During the audit, the establishment presents the documentation showing the results of the indoor air quality monitoring and any potential responsive action.

9.5 Environmentally friendly materials are used for refurbishments or construction works that started and/or were completed in the past 12 months. (G)

For the continuous improvement of the indoor environment and to reduce the environmental footprint by using less harmful products, the establishment uses environmentally friendly products in connection with refurbishment or construction of new buildings done within the past 12 months.

Environmentally friendly products include paints and other products not containing substances harmful to the environment or human health. The establishment can, for instance, use products with a nationally or internationally recognised eco-label, or from companies that have adopted an environmental management system. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and heavy metals are avoided in all materials, including paint, building materials, etc.

Environmentally friendly second hand/recycled natural products/materials are especially recommended. If wood or other plant materials are used in the refurbishment or construction, it is ensured that they are sustainably harvested (e.g. FSC labelled products) and preferably locally sourced.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation proving the use of environmentally friendly products in connection with refurbishment or new building done in the past 12 months.

9.6 Authentic elements of the local culture are considered in the operation and in connection with refurbishments or construction works. (G)

In connection with its operation, refurbishment or construction of buildings, the establishment uses locally appropriate and sustainable practices and materials.

The establishment values and incorporates authentic elements of traditional and contemporary local culture.

The legislation and regulations regarding the operation, and in connection with refurbishment or construction of new buildings must always be followed. It is encouraged to involve and utilise local education, knowledge, and experience in relation to the use of materials, technologies and tools for sustainable refurbishment or construction. The intellectual property rights of local communities are always respected.

During the audit, the establishment demonstrates its consideration for sustainable practices and materials, authentic elements of local culture, and that the intellectual property rights of local communities have not been violated in connection with its operation and in connection with refurbishment or construction of new buildings.

10. Green Areas

10.1 Chemical pesticides and fertilisers must not be used unless there is no organic or natural equivalent. (I)

When the establishment has green areas, the establishment does not use chemical pesticides (including herbicides) and fertilisers to minimise the use of chemicals and the risk of pollution of terrestrial/aquatic ecosystems and reduce health risks.

If pesticides and fertilisers are needed (preferably checked through an annual soil testing), organic or natural equivalents are used. This could be in the form of natural/organic soil conditioners. Gas flames or mechanical weed control are possible alternatives to chemical pesticides. Only in cases where no organic or natural replacements are available, may the establishment use chemical pesticides and fertilisers. In such a case, only “ready-to-use” products are purchased, preferably with slow release, and they are normally only used once a year at the minimum possible level.

Handling of pesticides can only be done by staff or external contractors trained/licensed for the purpose. Chemical substances are stored properly (see criterion 6.6).

This criterion also applies if the management of the establishment’s green areas is outsourced to an external company.

During the audit, the establishment presents its written policy on the use of pesticides and fertilisers in its green areas, showing that that it does not use chemical pesticides and fertilisers unless no organic or natural equivalent is available. If the work with green areas is outsourced to an external company, then this external company presents its policy on the use of pesticides and fertilisers in the green areas of the establishment. During visual inspection, a spot check might be conducted to confirm compliance with the criterion.

10.2 Newly purchased lawnmowers must either be electrically driven, be manually driven, or be awarded with an eco-label. (I)

If the establishment has green areas, the lawnmowers purchased within the last 12 months must be energy efficient and low in noise and carbon emissions. The lawnmowers are manual or electric, or the lawnmowers are awarded with an eco-label.

If the establishment has a lawn/grass area of more than 4000 m², then this criterion is guideline. If the management of the green areas of the establishment is outsourced to an external company, this criterion is also guideline.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing that lawnmowers purchased within the last 12 months by the establishment are environmentally friendly.

10.3 Flower and garden watering procedures are in place to save water. (I)

A procedure must be in place to minimise the consumption of water for irrigation. The irrigation system can, for instance, include procedures of watering during morning or evening hours, a moisture sensor system or a drip system aiming at minimising evaporation and providing the best impact for the roots of the plants. This can also include the use of collected rainwater, treated greywater or wastewater for watering flowers/gardens.

During the audit, the establishment presents its written policy on green area and garden irrigation, and the watering procedures are checked during the visual inspection, if possible.

10.4 *The establishment is taking initiatives to protect and support the local biodiversity on the premises of the establishment. (G)*

To protect, support and enhance local biodiversity, the establishment provides actions that favour conditions for the biodiversity on (or around) the premises, where possible.

Examples of actions include:

- Greening or rewilding of the premises
- Establishment/maintaining pollinator-friendly green areas
- Establishing/maintaining a green roof and/or vertical green walls
- Eradicating invasive species that threaten local species
- Using native species for the green roofs, green walls, gardens, and other outside areas
- Providing favourable conditions for local species (e.g. bird houses, insect hotels, beehives, etc.)
- Protecting habitats of local species (terrestrial or aquatic/marine) on or near the premises of the establishment (e.g. turtle nesting grounds, mangroves, coral reefs, etc.)
- Actively protect the local biodiversity in areas of the establishment that are frequented or inhabited by wildlife by actively minimising light and noise
- External biodiversity assessment carried out by an external expert before initiating new buildings or facilities

The actions must actively support the local (native/indigenous/endemic/rare) species of flora and fauna. The actions must not include the introduction of alien invasive species. Eradicating invasive species must be done in an environmentally friendly manner.

This criterion also applies if the management of the establishment's green areas is outsourced to an external company.

During the audit, the establishment shows the management plan or standard operating procedure for supporting the local biodiversity and eradicating invasive species. During the visual inspection, the establishment presents how favourable conditions for the local biodiversity have been created or how the habitats of local species have been protected on its premises.

10.5 The establishment only purchases native species of flora and fauna and actively eradicates invasive alien species from its premises. (G)

To protect the local biodiversity and to reduce the impacts of invasive alien species on local ecosystems, the establishment only purchases native species of flora and fauna for its premises. At the same time, the establishment is actively eradicating invasive alien species from its premises.

It is important that the staff responsible for the maintenance of the green areas of the premises is trained and informed about the native species of flora and fauna to purchase. It is also important that the staff knows about the threats of invasive alien species, how to identify them and how to remove them. Information about invasive alien species should be reported to relevant authorities.

This criterion also applies if the management of the establishment's green areas is outsourced to an external company.

During the audit, the establishment presents its management plan or standard operating procedure for the management of the green areas of the establishment that includes the active purchase of native species of flora and fauna and the active removal of invasive alien species.

10.6 The establishment has a fruit, herb, or vegetable garden on/near its premises. (G)

To reduce its environmental footprint, the establishment has a fruit, herb, or vegetable garden on or in the vicinity of its premises.

To comply with this criterion, the garden must be permanent and include herbs and/or food-bearing plants/trees. The produce must become part of the guest experience (e.g. by using it for food or beverages in the establishment, by offering products made of the produce in the gift shop, involving the guests in the harvest, etc.) and/or be used for staff meals. If possible, the establishment could also invite the public or local schools to visit the garden for educational purposes.

The management of the fruit, herb and vegetable garden follows the criteria regarding the use of pesticides and fertilisers (criterion 10.1) and watering procedures (criterion 10.3). The management of the garden and the use of the fruits/vegetables/herbs must follow national/local legislation on the matter.

Agricultural activities that generate the main revenue or a main part of the revenue of the establishment such as vineyards, olive farms etc. are excluded from this criterion.

During the audit, the visual inspection confirms the presence of a fruit, herb, or vegetable garden.

11. Corporate Social Responsibility

11.1 The establishment confirms that it follows all relevant international, national, and local legislation, including the areas of environment, health, safety, and labour. (I)

The establishment confirms that it has legally acquired property, land and water rights complying with local, communal, and indigenous rights (including their free, prior and informed consent). The establishment confirms that all its function and activities (including the areas of environment, labour, health, and safety) take place in compliance with international, national, and local legislation/regulations. The establishment also confirms that it respects local surrounding community rights and standards.

Regarding compliance with environmental requirements, the following conditions must, as minimum, be met:

- Ensuring that activities in connection with the management of the establishment do not have significant negative effects on natural ecosystems and wildlife. Any disturbance of natural ecosystems is minimised, rehabilitated and a compensatory contribution made to conservation management. This is always done according to national/local legislation. This also includes

practices to reduce pollution from noise and light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and air, water, and soil contaminants.

- If the establishment is in or near a sensitive or protected area, it knows and respects the legislation and regulations regarding tourism activities within the sensitive or protected area.

Regarding compliance with labour requirements, the following conditions must, at the minimum, be met:

- All employees receive information in writing (contract) stating the employment terms and conditions, including information about working hours and salary.
- All employees are paid at least a living wage.
- No employees receive money or pay deposits before starting work, and all employees receive owed money when terminating the work.
- All employees receive information in writing about the working code of conduct/policies of the establishment, and the written procedure for raising concerns/complaints.
- For all employees under the age of 18, national regulations as well as the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and ILO (International Labour Organization) Conventions 138/182 are followed.
- All employees receive fair treatment without discrimination (in connection with recruitment, general employment, training, promotion).
- All employees work in a safe and secure working environment.
- All employees are offered regular training, experience, and opportunities for advancement.
- All employees can give feedback on their work conditions (e.g. through appraisals, staff satisfaction survey, etc.).
- The employer keeps a copy of all pay slips and a record of number of working hours and overtime.

Regarding compliance with health and safety requirements, the following conditions must, as minimum, be met:

- All employees receive information and training about the health and safety requirements.
- All employees have access to the written health and safety policies and plans.
- All guests have access to written information about safety in the establishment.

Regarding compliance with local surrounding community rights and standards, the following conditions must, for example, be met:

- The activities do not adversely affect local access to livelihoods, land and aquatic resource use, rights-of-way, transport, and housing (including involuntary resettlement of inhabitants).
- The activities do not jeopardise the provision of basic food, water and energy services as well as health and sanitation services to neighbouring communities.
- The establishment does not prevent access by local residents to local historical, archaeological, or culturally and spiritually important properties and sites.
- The siting, land use, capacity, design, construction, operation and demolition of buildings and infrastructure comply with local zoning and protected or heritage area requirements. It takes account of the capacity and integrity of the natural and cultural heritage surroundings in siting, design, impact assessment and land rights and acquisition.
- The establishment identifies and follows the local development codes and architectural management guidelines.

During the audit, the establishment presents a written statement confirming compliance with relevant international, national, and local legislation, including the areas of environment, health, safety, and labour, as well as confirming its respect for local surrounding community rights and standards. The observations during the visual inspection confirm compliance with the requirements.

11.2 The establishment refrains from using/accepting child labour. (I)

As part of the corporate social responsibility of the establishment, it is very important that it refrains from child labour or from contracting suppliers using child labour.

The establishment commits to respecting children's rights and to protecting children from all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation. It is strongly recommended that the establishment adds this obligation to its sustainability (CSR) policy.

If a staff member notices child labour activities or sexual exploitation of children, he/she immediately reports the observations to the local authorities. In addition, the establishment makes its guests aware about child labour activities in the destinations and how to avoid them.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation (e.g. its CSR policy) showing how it ensures compliance with this criterion. Observations during the visual inspection confirm compliance with the requirements.

11.3 Plants and animals, as well as historical and archaeological artefacts, are not sold, traded, or displayed, except those which are permitted by law. (I)

To create awareness about the establishment's corporate social responsibility and support of environmental sustainability through the protection of species of plants and animals, e.g. endangered species as listed in the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) agreement, the establishment does not harvest, sell, trade or display these plant or animal species in the establishment.

Species of wild animals are not acquired, bred, or held captive, except for properly regulated activities, and when kept by those authorised and suitably equipped to house and care for them. Housing, care, and handling of all wild and domestic animals must meet the highest standards of animal welfare. Interactions with free roaming wildlife organised by the establishment are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse effects on the animals concerned, and on the viability and behaviour of populations in the wild (taking the cumulative impact into account).

To protect historical and archaeological artefacts, such items are also not sold, traded, or displayed by the establishment.

The establishment only sells, trades, or displays plants and animals and/or historical and archaeological artefacts if local, national, and international legislation permits it.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing how it works to ensure that no endangered species of animals and plants and no historical or archaeological artefacts are sold, traded, or displayed in the establishment. If the establishment is selling related products, it provides a statement from the national authorities permitting it to sell, trade or display the products. During the visual inspection, a spot check for sold, traded, or displayed species of plants/animals or historical/archaeological artefacts is carried out.

11.4 *The establishment provides access for people with additional needs. (G)*

To provide access for people with additional needs and to create awareness about the establishment's corporate social responsibility, it must provide access for people with additional needs. The access relates to guests as well as staff and other users of the establishment.

Examples of people with additional needs include people with certain physical disabilities (persons in wheelchairs, blind people, etc.) and people with specific health concerns.

This criterion includes access to the public areas: entrance and reception area, conference facilities, restaurant, public sanitary facilities, etc. It is strongly recommended that the facilities are approved by a national/local disability association.

In some special cases, the establishment may have received a dispensation from the authorities regarding certain types of access for people with additional needs, e.g. wheelchair access to old/historical buildings, and in these cases this criterion is not applicable.

The level of access for people with additional needs offered by the establishment is clearly communicated to the guests, staff, and other users. When information regarding access is present, users will have reasonable expectations, and it will also avoid unnecessary transportation.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear, and easily understandable information about its facilities, products, and services. The establishment must not promise more than can be provided.

During the audit (visual inspection), the establishment demonstrates access and procedures for people with additional needs, as well as the information provided about access for people with additional needs.

11.5 The establishment is equitable in hiring women and local minorities, including in management positions. (G)

To support the equal treatment and rights of people and create awareness about the establishment's corporate social responsibility, it hires staff, in all positions, without discrimination by age, race, gender, religion, disability, socio-economic status, etc. It is strongly recommended that the establishment adds this obligation to its sustainability (CSR) policy.

To support the community near the establishment, it is important that local residents (and especially local minorities) are given equality of opportunity to be employed as staff in the establishment, in all positions including in management positions, and that training is offered as well as advancement when possible. It is strongly recommended that the establishment also adds this obligation to its CSR policy.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation (e.g. its CSR policy) showing how it ensures that it is equitable in hiring women and local minorities, including in management positions. Observations made during the visual inspection confirm compliance with the requirements.

11.6 The establishment actively supports at least two environmental or social community development activities. (G)

To support the environmental, economic and socio-cultural sustainable development and to create awareness about the establishment's corporate social responsibility, it is active in supporting green actions or social community development activities (including education, health, sanitation, infrastructure, etc.).

It is encouraged that the support is focused on the area surrounding the establishment, but it could also be support of projects in other geographical areas. Examples of active support by the establishment could include:

- Tree-planting activities
- Planting and restoration of green areas
- Projects addressing the preservation of biodiversity with reference to aquatic/marine zone areas or projects supporting natural corridors and "rewilding" of open areas
- Protection of natural and culturally sensitive areas
- Projects addressing the impacts of climate change
- Outdoor actions (establishment of environmentally friendly boat mooring places, nature trails) that can also be used by the public
- Activities with schools or communities working with environmental or educational initiatives
- Activities with people with additional needs (vulnerable and/or less-resourced groups)
- Activities promoting social justice and equal rights
- Provision of basic food, water, energy services, as well as health and sanitation services in communities
- Provision of space for meetings and events for local community groups, e.g. schools or NGOs, at no or reduced costs
- Support to infrastructure challenges (e.g. water supply), etc.

Actions/initiatives on various biodiversity and environmental protection initiatives (e.g. tree-planting, planting and restoration of green areas, natural corridor and rewilding projects, etc.) are strongly encouraged.

It is encouraged that the establishment gives its employees the opportunity to volunteer their time and services for these actions/initiatives during regular working hours, and that the establishment keeps a record of the hours that the employees have spent on volunteering.

To comply with this criterion, the establishment is actively supporting at least two actions/initiatives.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing the active support of at least two environmental or social community development actions. Furthermore, the establishment shows its record of the hours spent by employees on volunteering.

11.7 The establishment offers the means for local small entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products that are based on the area's nature, history, and culture. (G)

To promote a sustainable local socio-cultural and economic development, and to create awareness about the establishment's corporate social responsibility, it offers the means for small local entrepreneurs to produce and sell sustainable products and services based on the nature, history and culture of the local area in the establishment.

This can be in the form of a small shop or stand within the premises of the establishment. Alternatively, the establishment can purchase and offer the local products concerned to its guests.

The products are produced locally and in a sustainable manner and based on the area's nature, history, and culture. The availability of products will depend on the business concept of the establishment.

During the audit, the establishment presents all agreements with small local entrepreneurs that sell products and services in/to the establishment. During the visual inspection, it can be confirmed that small local entrepreneurs are able to sell products and services in/to the establishment.

11.8 The establishment does not offer entertainment which involves domesticated or wild animals. (G)

To support animal welfare in tourism, the establishment does not offer in-house entertainment which involves domesticated or wild animals. This refers only to shows and performances offered in the establishment, as well as animals used for staged photos for guests.

During the audit, the in-house entertainment plan for the guests is presented and it is checked that it does not include shows or performances with animals.

11.9 If the establishment keeps animals on its premises, animal welfare guidelines must be followed. (G)

To support animal welfare in tourism and to protect the local biodiversity, animal welfare guidelines are respected when keeping animals on the premises of the establishment.

To evaluate the well-being of the animals on the premises, [ABTA's Global Welfare Guidance for Animals in Tourism](#) based on the principles of the Five Freedoms should be respected:

1. Good feeding: Absence of prolonged hunger or thirst
2. Good housing: Comfort while resting, thermal comfort
3. Good health: Absence of injuries, diseases and pain induced by inappropriate management procedures
4. Appropriate behaviour: Expression of social behaviours; natural behaviours; good human-animal relationship; positive emotional state
5. Protection from fear and distress; absence of general fear/distress/apathy; ability to seek privacy/refuge; absence of surgical or physical modification of the skin, tissues, teeth or bone structure other than for the purposes of genuine medical treatment/manipulation/sedation

In addition, the establishment does not offer direct contact with captive wild animals, animal performances, fights, or races.

During the audit, the establishment presents written confirmation that it has read and understood the animal welfare guideline above, e.g. by adding it to the sustainability policy or by presenting the standard operating procedure for the maintenance of and care for the animals. The visual inspection confirms that the guidelines are respected.

11.10 The establishment formulates a sustainable purchasing policy. (G)

The establishment formulates and adopts a sustainable purchasing policy to favour environmentally and socially sustainable suppliers and products, but also to reduce unnecessary use of resources, waste and transportation.

The sustainable purchasing policy covers capital goods, food/beverages, building materials and consumables as well as services.

The sustainable purchasing policy aims to ensure a common understanding of sustainable purchasing and outlines the general requirements for sustainable purchasing to be followed by the staff of the establishment for all product purchases done through suppliers and directly by the establishment. The sustainable purchasing policy should include both environmental and social sustainability aspects.

The sustainable purchasing policy of the establishment is normally reviewed at least every third year. If the establishment is part of an international or national chain, a common sustainable purchasing policy can be formulated by the chain and shared for establishments within the same chain.

After the sustainable purchasing policy is developed, all relevant staff is informed about the policy.

During the audit, the establishment presents its sustainable purchasing policy document, and it is checked that the policy is less than three years old. The establishment should also present how the staff is informed about the policy.

11.11 Material/supplies that are no longer used are collected and donated to charitable organisations. (G)

To reduce the environmental footprint through reuse and to create awareness about the establishment's corporate social responsibility, it collects and donates materials and supplies that can still be used but that are no longer needed by the establishment to charitable organisations (e.g. organisations supporting persons in need, etc.) in order for these charities to reuse or re-sell the material/supplies.

To comply with this criterion, the material/supplies should have been donated to charitable organisations within the previous 12-month period.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing that redundant material/supplies have been donated to charitable organisations within the last 12 months.

12. Green Activities

12.1 Information about nearby parks, landscape and nature conservation areas must be available to the guests. (I)

To strengthen the environmental/sustainability profile of the establishment and to encourage the guests to get involved in green/sustainable activities, the establishment offers information about nearby parks, landscape, nature conservation areas and/or other sensitive areas. Where appropriate, the information

includes interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage, as well as explaining appropriate behaviour while visiting these areas. See also criterion 12.4.

The information includes encouragements for guests to choose nearby outdoor or green activities for awareness-raising of the areas, but also for well-being purposes. The information can encourage walks, jogging, bicycling, swimming, sailing, canoeing, bird-watching, picnicking, outdoor playgrounds, etc.

For visits to natural areas, indigenous communities and cultural and/or historically sensitive sites, the information includes the encouragement to follow established international and national good practice and locally agreed guidance, in order to minimise adverse impacts and maximise local benefits and visitor satisfaction. It is important that the visits to natural aquatic/marine or terrestrial areas do not have a negative impact on the biodiversity of the areas, but preferably contribute positively to the protection of the biodiversity.

The information can be obtained from the reception/concierge, an environmental corner in the lobby, via TV monitors in the public areas or conference areas, binders in the conference rooms, etc.

Although the information is directed towards guests, the establishment is also encouraged to provide similar information to its staff.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear, and easily understandable information.

During the audit (visual inspection), the establishment presents the information provided to guests about nearby parks, landscape, nature conservation areas, indigenous communities or cultural/historical sites of interest (including the interpretation, good practice/guidance and code of conduct for visiting the sites or areas). It is checked that the information is accurate, clear, and easily understandable.

12.2 The establishment must provide information about the nearest place to rent or borrow bicycles. (I)

To encourage the use of sustainable transportation, the establishment provides information about the nearest place to borrow or rent bicycles.

The information can be obtained from the reception/concierge, an environmental corner in the lobby, via TV monitors or binders in the public areas or conference areas.

Although the information is directed towards guests, the establishment is also encouraged to provide similar information to its staff.

If the establishment is in an area where bicycling is impossible due to very dangerous traffic conditions, extreme weather conditions or other special circumstances, then the establishment is exempted from complying with the criterion.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear, and easily understandable information.

During the audit (visual inspection), the establishment presents the information provided to guests about the nearest location to rent or borrow bicycles. It is checked that the information is accurate, clear, and easily understandable.

12.3 The guests can borrow or rent bicycles from the establishment. (G)

To encourage the use of sustainable transportation, the establishment offers guests the possibility of borrowing or renting bicycles directly from the establishment.

The information can be obtained from the reception/concierge, an environmental corner in the lobby, via TV monitors or binders in the public areas or conference areas.

If the establishment is in an area where bicycling is impossible due to very dangerous traffic conditions, extreme weather conditions or other special circumstances, then this criterion is non-applicable.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear, and easily understandable information. The establishment does not promise more than can be delivered by the establishment.

During the audit, the visual inspection confirms the availability of bicycles from the establishment.

12.4 The establishment promotes responsible tourist behaviour in the destination. (G)

To protect the local biodiversity, animal welfare, culture and community, the establishment provides information to its guests that promotes responsible behaviour in the destination.

The information can, for example, include:

- Codes of conduct and best practice advice for visits to natural areas, indigenous communities and cultural and/or historically sensitive sites. This includes for example dress codes, codes of conduct, information about closing season or restricted areas etc. (where relevant)
- Information about nearby Blue Flag awarded beaches or marinas
- Information about responsible tourist attractions and tour operators (including Blue Flag awarded boating tourism operators)
- Information about tour operators respecting animal welfare rights: [ABTA's Global Welfare Guidance for Animals in Tourism](#) (see criterion 11.9), as well as no direct contact with captive wild animals, animal performances, fights, and races.
- Information about interaction with free roaming wildlife that are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse effects on the animals concerned and, on the viability and behaviour of populations in the wild
- Souvenir guides explaining which products may and may not be purchased
- Information about restaurants that do not offer endangered species
- Information about restaurants, shops and markets that sell traditional and local meals and products
- Information about how guests can ensure that they do not become a nuisance to the local residents, e.g. codes of conduct to prevent noise pollution in densely populated areas etc.
- Initiatives to reduce the amount of waste produced in the destination, e.g. information about water bottle refill stations or the recycling system in public spaces, provision of reusable water bottles or shopping bags etc.

As part of joining the Green Key programme, the establishment must in all material and communication provide accurate, clear, and easily understandable information.

During the audit, the establishment presents information provided to guests that promotes responsible behaviour in the destination.

12.5 The establishment provides awareness raising activities for its guests focused on sustainable development, the environment and nature within the premises or the local community. (G)

To increase the sustainability awareness of the guests, the establishment provides awareness raising activities focused on sustainable development, the environment, and nature in or around the premises.

The awareness raising activities could include encouragement to participate in actions related to Earth Hour, Earth Day, Energy Saving Week, Waste Reduction Week, World Food Day, World Vegan Day, World Vegetarian Day, World Environment Day, etc. They could also include promotion of car-free activities, nature guided tours to the green areas within the premises of the establishment or to nearby areas, participation in tree-planting events or other climate change actions, establishment of pollinator-friendly local green areas or other activities protecting local flora and fauna, harvesting and food-picking activities, beach clean-up events, participation in educational activities with schools, charity events, etc.

The establishment is especially encouraged to contribute to the support of biodiversity conservation, including supporting natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value.

It must be ensured that all activities (including harvesting and food-picking activities) are only done as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilization is sustainable, and in compliance with local, national and international laws.

To comply with this criterion, guests of the establishment must be actively involved. The establishment is also encouraged to involve staff in these activities.

During the audit, the establishment presents the documentation (pictures, agreements, marketing material, etc.) showing the awareness-raising activities held within the past 12 months and planned for the coming 12 months.

13. Administration

13.1 Third-party operated shops and businesses located on the premises of the establishment must be informed about Green Key and the sustainability initiatives of the establishment and be encouraged to manage their activities in the same spirit. (I)

Many establishments have third-party operated shops and businesses located in their premises. The term “third-party operated” means shops/businesses that are not owned by the establishment or are in concession from the establishment. Third-party operated shops and businesses can, for instance, include hairdressers, cafés, pubs, restaurants, travel and tourism agencies, souvenir shops, clothes shops, kiosks, bike rentals, etc.

These third-party operated shops and businesses are informed about the environmental, climate change and sustainability initiatives of the establishment, including information about Green Key. The information can be provided through written communication or in connection with joint meetings, etc. Where possible, the employees in these third-party operated shops and businesses receive training in the same way as the staff in the establishment.

The third-party operated shops and businesses are also encouraged to manage their activities following the Green Key criteria or in the same spirit as the Green Key programme.

During the audit, the establishment presents information about third-party operated shops and businesses within its premises. Documentation (e.g. meeting minutes or communication via email, agreements, etc.) is presented showing that the third-party operated shops and businesses are informed about the environmental and sustainability initiatives of the establishment and encouraged to manage their activities in the same spirit following the Green Key requirements.

13.2 A minimum of 75% of the purchases of printing paper, envelopes and printed material produced or ordered by the establishment is eco-labelled or produced by a company with an environmental management system. (I)

To decrease energy and waste consumption (and thereby reduce the environmental footprint), the use of printing paper, envelopes and printed material is kept to a minimum. The printing paper, envelopes and printing material have an eco-label, e.g. EU Ecolabel, FSC-label (preferably FSC Recycled or FSC Mix), or are produced by a company with an environmental management system.

The requirement relates to a minimum of 75% of the printing paper, envelopes and printed material purchased or produced within the last 12 months.

During the audit, the establishment presents the documentation showing that printing paper, envelopes and printed material purchased within the last 12 months are eco-labelled, recycled or produced by a company

with an environmental management system. The observations during the visual inspection confirm compliance with the requirements.

13.3 The establishment takes initiatives to reduce the use of paper at the front desk, in offices, and in meeting rooms. (I)

To reduce the environmental footprint through decreasing the energy consumption, use of resources and the production of waste in relation to paper use, the establishment takes initiatives to reduce the use of paper in offices, guest rooms and meeting rooms.

The initiatives to reduce the use of paper can be a limitation of paper available in the meeting rooms, e.g. a few pieces of paper available only and in a smaller format (A5 instead of A4), paper only available upon request, paper only available at a central table in the meeting rooms, accessibility to tablets for taking notes (instead of paper), etc.

In the offices, the initiatives can include an encouragement to limit the printing of documents, printing on both sides and/or the reuse of paper for notes, etc.

At the front desk, the initiatives can include not printing invoices unless requested (or sent by e-mail), not using envelopes for printed invoices, etc.

Staff in other areas than offices and front desk staff are also encouraged to reduce the use of paper, when possible.

To comply with this criterion, the establishment takes initiatives to reduce the use of paper in at least two areas of operation.

During the audit, the establishment presents information about their initiatives to reduce the use of paper in at least two areas of operation, and the visual inspection confirms the initiatives.

13.4 The establishment informs its suppliers about its sustainability commitments and strongly encourages the suppliers to follow the same sustainability commitments. (I)

As the establishment is in regular contact with its product/service suppliers, it informs all suppliers about its environmental, climate change and sustainability initiatives, including information about Green Key. The information includes information about the reduction in the use of resources, the use of cleaner and resource friendly alternatives (including transportation) and the commitment to social standards.

The information is provided through written communication or in connection with joint meetings, etc.

Furthermore, the suppliers are strongly encouraged to manage their activities following the Green Key criteria in the same spirit as the Green Key programme regarding all aspects of sustainability management.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation (e.g. written information) showing that the suppliers have been informed about the environmental and sustainability initiatives of the establishment and have been encouraged to manage their activities in the same spirit or following the Green Key criteria.

13.5 The establishment ensures that at least 75% of the suppliers used are eco-certified, have a written environmental policy and/or are committed to sustainable development. (G)

As the establishment is in regular contact with its product/service suppliers, it ensures that at least 75% of all suppliers used are eco-certified, have an environmental management system, have a written environmental policy and/or are in other ways demonstrating commitment to sustainable development.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation (a list of suppliers including e.g. their eco-certification) showing that at least 75% of all suppliers used are eco-certified, have an environmental

management system, have a written environmental policy and/or are in other ways committed to sustainable development.

13.6 *If the laundry service is outsourced to an external company, this company is located within 100 km from the establishment. (G)*

To reduce the carbon footprint generated through the transportation of laundry, the establishment chooses a laundry services that is located not further than 100 km away from the establishment.

If an establishment is taking care of all the laundry service in-house, this criterion is not applicable.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing that the location of the laundry service is less than 100 km away.

13.7 *At least 75% of the newly purchased durables have an eco-label or must be produced by a company with an environmental management system. (G)*

To ensure environmentally friendly and sustainable production of durables, durables purchased within the last 12 months have an eco-label or are produced by a company with an environmental management system.

Durables are products made to withstand repeated and longer lasting use, and include furniture, carpets, tableware, etc. Electronic devices are not part of this criterion as they are covered in section 7.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing that a minimum of 75% of the durables purchased within the last 12 months have an eco-label or are produced by a company with an environmental management system.

13.8 *The establishment refurbishes or upcycles own durables or purchases second-hand durables. (G)*

For the establishment to reduce its environmental footprint through reduced purchase of newly produced durables, the establishment has refurbished or upcycled own durables or purchased second-hand durables within the past 12 months.

Durables are products made to withstand repeated and longer lasting use and include furniture, carpets, tableware, etc. When buying second-hand electronic devices, the energy efficiency of these products must be taken into consideration.

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing that it has actively upcycled own durables or purchased second-hand durables within the last 12 months.

13.9 *The establishment uses environmentally friendly motorised vehicles. (G)*

To reduce air pollution and the energy consumption from motorised vehicles used by the establishment, these vehicles must be environmentally friendly.

Environmentally friendly motorised vehicles include cars, scooters, golf carts and other vehicles that are used to move around on the premises and to transport guests or staff. If the establishment delivers food/beverage products out of the establishment, these vehicles must also comply with this criterion. The criterion also concerns vehicles owned or rented by the establishment.

To be environmentally friendly, they must be powered by renewable fuels or be electric.

To comply with this criterion, at least 75% of the motorised vehicles owned or used by the establishment are environmentally friendly.

During the audit, the establishment presents a written overview of all motorised vehicles that are used with an indication of how they comply. During the visual inspection, a spot check verifies compliance.

13.10 Vehicles entering the establishment are not idling for more than two minutes. (G)

To reduce air pollution and the use of resources, vehicles entering the establishment are not idling (having engines running) while picking up or off-loading persons or goods.

Vehicles of the establishment can have the engine running for a maximum of two minutes. If the national or local legislation is stricter than the maximum allowed two minutes, the national/local legislation prevails.

To comply with this criterion, the establishment has formulated a policy for vehicles idling for a maximum of two minutes. The policy is subsequently communicated to the guests and staff. This can be done through signs by the entrance of the establishment. It can also be incorporated in the standard operating policy for staff of the establishment using vehicles and the standard operating policy for the concierge informing guests arriving to the establishment about the non-idling policy of the establishment.

During the audit, the establishment presents its policy of having vehicles idling for a maximum of two minutes at the establishment as well as its work to make guests and staff aware of the policy.

13.11 The use of environmentally friendly means of transportation by the staff is encouraged. (G)

To reduce air pollution and improve health, the staff of the establishment use environmentally friendly means of transportation to work.

Environmentally friendly transportation includes bicycles, public transportation (bus, train, tram, boat, etc.), use of electric vehicles, car-pooling programmes, shuttle bus systems for staff, etc.

The establishment can encourage the use of environmentally friendly transportation through verbal or written communication. The establishment can provide proper facilities (safe and good bicycle parking, charging stations for electric cars, etc.) and/or it can offer financial incentives (e.g. tickets for use of public transportation, no costs for parking/charging electric cars, free shuttle bus, support to car-pooling initiatives, etc.).

During the audit, the establishment presents documentation showing its encouragement to the staff to use environmentally friendly transportation. Where possible, the compliance is verified during the visual inspection.



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