

# ASEAN ECOTOURISM STANDARD

## for Activities, Facilities, Services



 **Southeast Asia**  
A DESTINATION FOR EVERY DREAM



**2024**

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	i
Section I. ASEAN Ecotourism Standard.....	1
1. Foreword .....	1
2. Introduction.....	1
3. Scope .....	2
4. Terms and Definitions .....	3
4.1. Ecotourism .....	3
4.2. Ecotourism Operators.....	3
4.3. Ecotourism Activities .....	3
4.4. Ecotourism Facilities .....	3
4.5. Ecotourism Services .....	3
4.6. Greenwashing .....	4
4.7. Composition of the Standard.....	4
4.8. Adaptive Management .....	4
4.9. Sustainable Use.....	4
4.10. Safeguarding .....	4
4.11. Community Welfare .....	5
4.12. Stakeholder Awareness.....	5
4.13. Leveraging Appreciation.....	5
4.14. Quality Experience .....	5
4.15. Partnership and Collaboration .....	5
4.16. Safety and Security.....	6
5. Theme and Criteria .....	6
5.1. Theme .....	6
5.2. Criteria 1. Adaptive Management (AM).....	7
5.3. Criteria 2. Sustainable Use (SU) .....	7
5.4. Criteria 3. Safeguarding (SG).....	8
5.5. Criteria 4. Community Welfare (CW) .....	8
5.6. Criteria 5. Stakeholder Awareness (SA) .....	9
5.7. Criteria 6. Leveraging Appreciation (LA) .....	9
5.8. Criteria 7. Quality Experience (QE) .....	9
5.9. Criteria 8. Partnership and Collaboration (PC).....	10
5.10. Criteria 9. Safety & Security (SS) .....	10
6. Recognition and Certification Scheme .....	10
7. Table of Criteria and Indicator.....	13
7.1. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 1. Adaptive Management .....	13
7.2. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 2. Sustainable Use .....	15
7.3. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 3. Safeguarding.....	17
7.4. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 4. Community Welfare .....	18
7.5. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 5. Stakeholder Awareness .....	19
7.6. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 6. Leveraging Appreciation .....	19

7.7.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 7. Quality Experience.....	20
7.8.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 8. Partnership and Collaboration.....	22
7.9.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 9. Safety and Security .....	22
Section II. Audit and Certification Manual.....		24
1.	Foreword .....	24
2.	Introduction.....	24
3.	Scope .....	24
4.	Terms and Definition .....	24
4.1.	ASEAN Member States (AMS).....	24
4.2.	ASEAN Ecotourism Standards (AECOS) .....	25
4.3.	National Tourism Organization .....	25
4.4.	National Assessment Committee for AECOS .....	25
5.	Proposed Certification Body.....	25
6.	Certification of ASEAN Ecotourism Standards.....	27
6.1.	The Initiation Process.....	27
6.2.	Auditor Development Process .....	27
6.3.	The Recognition and Certification Process .....	27
6.4.	The Online Platform for Assessment .....	29
6.5.	The Entry Requirement.....	29
7.	Validation Period .....	30
8.	Benefits and Privileges .....	30
9.	Certification Logo .....	30
10.	Auditing Process .....	31
11.	Code of Conduct of the National Assessment Committee .....	33
12.	Suspension and Withdrawal of Certification .....	33
12.1.	Suspension of certification .....	33
12.2.	Withdrawal of certification .....	33
13.	Appeal and Complaint .....	34
13.1.	Appeal .....	34
13.2.	Complaint.....	34
14.	Cancellation of Certification .....	34
Appendix 1: ASEAN Ecotourism Standard for Activities .....		35
1.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 1. Adaptive Management.....	35
2.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 2. Sustainable Use .....	36
3.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 3. Safeguarding.....	38
4.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 4. Community Welfare .....	39
5.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 5. Stakeholder Awareness.....	40
6.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 6. Leveraging Appreciation.....	40
7.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 7. Quality Experience .....	41
8.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 8. Partnership and Collaboration .....	42
9.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 9. Safety and Security.....	43
Appendix 2: ASEAN Ecotourism Standard for Facilities.....		44
1.	Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 1. Adaptive Management.....	44

2. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 2. Sustainable Use .....	46
3. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 3. Safeguarding.....	48
4. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 4. Community Welfare .....	49
5. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 5. Stakeholder Awareness.....	50
6. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 6. Leveraging Appreciation.....	50
7. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 7. Quality Experience .....	51
8. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 8. Partnership and Collaboration .....	52
9. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 9. Safety and Security.....	53
Appendix 3: ASEAN Ecotourism Standard for Services.....	55
1. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 1. Adaptive Management.....	55
2. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 2. Sustainable Use .....	56
3. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 3. Safeguarding.....	58
4. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 4. Community Welfare .....	59
5. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 5. Stakeholder Awareness.....	60
6. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 6. Leveraging Appreciation.....	61
7. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 7. Quality Experience .....	61
8. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 8. Partnership and Collaboration .....	63
9. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 9. Safety and Security.....	63

**List of Table**

Table I. 1 List of Themes and Number of Criteria for Each Theme.....	6
Table I. 2 Levels of Criteria .....	10
Table I. 3 Weight Value.....	11
Table I. 4 Certification Scheme.....	11
Table I. 5 Recognition Scheme .....	12
Table II. 1 Responsibilities of Organizations .....	26
Table II. 2 Entry Requirements of Ecotourism Operators.....	29

**List of Diagram**

Diagram II. 1 Organization Structure of AECOS Certification Body .....	25
--	----

**List of Image**

Image II. 1 Certification Logo.....	30
-------------------------------------	----



Section I

# ASEAN ECOTOURISM STANDARD

for Activities, Facilities, Services

2024



## **Section I. ASEAN Ecotourism Standard**

### **1. Foreword**

The ASEAN Ecotourism Standard is a comprehensive ecotourism standard for activities, facilities, and services that can be adapted by ASEAN Member States. It is aligned with the ASEAN Framework of Sustainable Tourism Development in the Post COVID Era. According to this, in the long term, the ASEAN region is envisioned to be recognized as a quality sustainable tourism destination, which promotes the economic prosperity, welfare, and engagement of the local community; protects and develops its natural environment and culture; and provides a high-quality experience to responsible visitors.

The ASEAN Ecotourism Standard is designed to promote environmentally favorable approaches, offer comprehensive guidelines, monitor performance, and modernize ecotourism practices towards authentic ecotourism embracing sustainability. This standard aims to keep its compliance to the global standards and the current global tourism trend occurring in Southeast Asia. The establishment of the standard shall guide ecotourism stakeholders to increase not only the quality, but also the level of sustainability of their activities, facilities, and services. In developing the standard, we have analyzed existing tourism standards used by all ASEAN member states, where common grounds and gaps were identified. The resulting standard will focus on 9(nine) themes comprising 65(sixty-five) criteria.

### **2. Introduction**

Post COVID, tourism is accelerating in an unprecedented manner particularly in Southeast Asia. According to UN Tourism, Asia and the Pacific reached 65% of pre-COVID arrival levels with a gradual recovery since the start of 2023. Moreover, following a strong rebound in 2023, international tourism is expected to fully recover pre-COVID levels in 2024. Within the market, the awareness of sustainable tourism has been rising, it also indicates the market is becoming more sustainable. Nevertheless, responsible tourism is still taken lightly, and the tourism businesses are said to be among the slowest to practice sustainability.

Ecotourism is believed to be an effective tool to conserve the natural areas while improving the welfare of the community through interpretation and education. However, in many cases often ecotourism development leads to a degradation of nature because of a lack of understanding on the ecotourism principles and how to implement them. Many nature-based tourism destinations claim and are promoted to market as the ecotourism destinations despite their lack of or limited sustainable practices. This situation is very concerning as it is often referred to as 'greenwashing' in ecotourism. Therefore, a localized yet globally recognized standard is urgently needed among the destinations and the service providers. This, in turn, encourages visitors to act responsibly and sustainably in the destinations.

The ASEAN Ecotourism Standard is a comprehensive ecotourism standard for activities, facilities, and services, which will contribute to assisting ASEAN member states to improve sustainability in the ecotourism sector. The Standard is expected to guide facility managers as well as activity and service providers to prioritize ecotourism over 'not-so-sustainable' nature-based tourism. It helps to benchmark the local socio-economic impacts, cultural assets preserved and utilized responsibly for tourism, and raise environmental awareness to have businesses convert themselves to take sustainable actions.

The ecotourism-related policies from 10 ASEAN Member States (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) have been examined. All member states have their own national tourism development plan with some references to ecotourism development yet most of them do not have a specific development policy nor specific standard for ecotourism. Some countries, however, have other tourism standards that refer to the ecotourism principles. The ASEAN Tourism Standards are designed to enhance the quality of tourism products and services and encourage responsible management of the businesses and stakeholders in the region. Judging from the foundation of the ASEAN Tourism Standards which emphasize responsible tourism, the development of an ecotourism standard can focus specifically on promoting activities, facilities, and services that prioritize conservation, minimize environmental degradation, and respect local cultures and communities.

The ASEAN Ecotourism Standard must look up into previous and current practices as references yet needs to be sensible to the challenges, opportunities, and trends in the ASEAN region. They include (1) climate change mitigation and adaptation (2) waste management (3) ensure opportunities for local communities and local economic development (4) initiate partnership and collaboration to address the common challenges.

### **3. Scope**

The ASEAN Ecotourism Standard has 3(three) categories: Activities, Facilities, and Services. Therefore, it targets ecotourism operators, which is an individual, or company, or organization that plans, organizes and delivers ecotourism experiences. The operators can be categorized in the following groups:

- activity operators
- facility owners or managers
- service providers

The Standard focuses on implementing essential principles of ecotourism development criteria such as sustainable management, quality of natural and cultural resources, engagement of stakeholders, wellbeing of local communities, and quality of educational services for visitors.

## **4. Terms and Definitions**

For the purposes of this ASEAN Ecotourism Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

### **4.1. Ecotourism**

Ecotourism is defined as responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment, improve the welfare of local people, and create knowledge and understanding through interpretation and education of all involved (Global Ecotourism Network, 2015).

### **4.2. Ecotourism Operators**

An ecotourism operator is an individual, company, organization that plans, organizes and delivers ecotourism experiences.

### **4.3. Ecotourism Activities**

Activities are on-site experiences that are delivered by activity operators, for example: wildlife viewing (safaris, bird watching, and marine life observation), educational tours (guided nature walks, archaeological tours, natural history tours, and eco-friendly tours), adventure (hiking tours, rafting, kayaking, and canopy walk), cultural experience (visiting traditional communities, participating in traditional crafts, cooking class, and attending local festivals). Operators provide the equipment and people (guides) necessary to provide an activity. An independent guide offering a tour would be considered an activity operator.

### **4.4. Ecotourism Facilities**

Ecotourism facilities are buildings, structures, or places that include accommodation, restaurants, souvenir shops, public toilets, gazebo, visitor/educational center, trails, boardwalk, canopy walk, campsite, parking lot, etc. The ecotourism facilities are located in or adjacent to an area with special ecological or cultural features. They are sensitively designed, using sustainable materials and practices, located to minimize physical footprint and any ecological or visual impact. Others also include renewable energy installations and waste management systems.

### **4.5. Ecotourism Services**

Ecotourism services are directly and indirectly offered by tour operators, transport providers, communities, accommodations, homestay owners, food and beverage, destination management companies, nature schools, etc. The ecotourism services include guides, interpreters, low impact transportation, local cuisine, low impact and educational activities.

#### **4.6. Greenwashing**

Greenwashing refers to when a company, operator or destination presents itself as environmentally friendly or sustainable through its marketing but does not live up to those claims. This can involve making unsubstantiated claims or using deceptive marketing tactics to create an illusion of sustainability without implementing impactful practices.

#### **4.7. Composition of the Standard**

The Standard comprises 3 (three) levels of criteria that indicate which criterion needs to be fulfilled. The 3 (three) levels are: (1) Mandatory Criteria (MC) - a set of compulsory criteria required to satisfy the compliance of the Standard; (2) Optional Criteria (OC) - a set of criteria preferable that they are complied with, but not mandatory; for ones seeking higher level of sustainability achievements; and (3) Specific Criteria (SC) - a set of additional mandatory criteria for an operator that offers one or more specific activity or service.

#### **4.8. Adaptive Management**

It means to maximize the tourism benefits and minimize the negative impacts. It is important for ecotourism stakeholders to incorporate a management system which attempts to maximize the benefits of tourism while reducing its impacts for the people and the environment. Ecotourism activity, facility, and service managers should carefully develop their business plan while monitoring and evaluating their impacts from their activities, facilities, and services.

#### **4.9. Sustainable Use**

It means contributing to nature conservation. Caring for nature as the primary asset for ecotourism development needs a change of mindset by all tourism stakeholders. In addition to minimizing negative impacts to nature, ecotourism stakeholders should attempt to contribute by reinvesting profits from tourism back to conservation of nature, landscape and habitat, as well as biodiversity.

#### **4.10. Safeguarding**

It means contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage and spiritual assets. Cultural heritage and spiritual assets are social values which are still well preserved in most ASEAN member states. They are also our unique characteristics which differentiate ASEAN member states from others; thus, its preservation is mandatory for ecotourism.

#### **4.11. Community Welfare**

It means to improve livelihood, local economy, and welfare. Ecotourism contributes to improve community welfare at host destinations in many different ways; engage communities in the development phases, open opportunities for improving local livelihood, and contribute to strengthen local economic development, and support conservation in the protected areas. In addition, it will also contribute positively to the sustainability of the ecotourism business.

#### **4.12. Stakeholder Awareness**

It means to increase the level of understanding among the stakeholders what is ecotourism. It is important to raise awareness of all stakeholders for ecotourism development and resilience; to increase their level of understanding on the importance and benefits of ecotourism for sustainability. The use of digital technology can accelerate and widen as well as deepen the process.

#### **4.13. Leveraging Appreciation**

It means providing interpretation to improve visitors' appreciation on the importance of natural resources conservation. This will trigger to change their mindset and behavior to take actions on nature conservation and cultural preservation. The interpretation with digital technology can accelerate and widen as well as deepen the process.

#### **4.14. Quality Experience**

It means enhancing the quality of visitor experience. Ecotourism puts significant importance on ensuring quality experience for visitors and communities. Service excellence is one of the key success factors at all tourism services; for instance, by providing qualified tour guides or authentic cultural exchanges between communities and visitors.

#### **4.15. Partnership and Collaboration**

It means maintaining sustainability and creating positive ripple effects by strengthening collaboration. Collaborative actions among attraction managers or activity providers with various parties, such as other attractions, governments, private sectors, universities, and the media, are one of the keys to sustainability. Collaborative actions should be carried out based on the principles of mutual respect, mutual benefit, and shared risks. Both partnership and collaboration are a must for strengthening supply chains, management capacity, competitiveness of ecotourism products, opportunities for funding, and facilitating support.

#### 4.16. Safety and Security

It means mitigating risks to ensure business continuity and visitor safety. Safety is the condition of being protected from harm or danger, while security is the protection from, or resilience against, potential harm. Due to its location at natural and sometimes remote areas, ecotourism operators should pay attention to control the identified hazards and to provide protection from hostile forces in order to achieve an acceptable level of risk and control measures.

### 5. Theme and Criteria

#### 5.1. Theme

There are 9 (nine) different themes and 65 (sixty-five) different Criteria for the ASEAN Ecotourism Standard. The Criteria for each theme are described in the following sub-chapters.

**Table I. 1 List of Themes and Number of Criteria for Each Theme**

No	Themes	No of Criteria	Mandatory	Optional
1	<b>Adaptive Management (AM)</b>	12	7	4
	Maximizing the Benefits and Minimizing the Negative Impacts			
2	<b>Sustainable Use (SU)</b>	15	6	6
	Contributing to Natural Conservation			
3	<b>Safeguarding (SG)</b>	6	4	1
	Contributing to Preservation of Cultural Heritage and Spiritual Assets			
4	<b>Community Welfare (CW)</b>	7	6	1
	Improving Livelihood, Local Economy, and Welfare			
5	<b>Stakeholder Awareness (SA)</b>	3	2	1
	Increasing Understanding of Stakeholder on Ecotourism			
6	<b>Leveraging Appreciation (LA)</b>	4	2	2
	Providing Interpretation to Improve Tourists Appreciation			
7	<b>Quality Experience (QE)</b>	10	3	4
	Enhancing the Quality of Tourist Experience by Providing an Excellent Service			
8	<b>Partnership and Collaboration (PC)</b>	2	1	1
	Maintaining Sustainability by Strengthening Collaboration			
9	<b>Safety and Security (SS)</b>	6	4	2
	Mitigating Risks to Ensure Business Continuity and Tourist Safety			
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>22</b>

## **5.2. Criteria 1. Adaptive Management (AM)**

1. AM.1 Reinvest profits from ecotourism development to maintain the quality of natural and cultural resources (MC)
2. AM.2 Implement a medium/long term and comprehensive sustainability management system for continuous improvement (MC)
3. AM.3 Encourage purchasing policies favor environmentally-friendly suppliers and products subject to local market conditions (MC)
4. AM.4 Respect and abide by local, national, and international legislation and regulations (MC)
5. AM.5 Respect and observe guidance/guidelines on tourism activities at local and traditional communities, as well as spiritually, culturally and historically sensitive sites (MC)
6. AM.6 Inform visitors about sustainable options for facilities, activities, and services, within the destination (MC)
7. AM.7 Actively engage in efficient purchasing and consumption to minimize waste (MC)
8. AM.8 Actively engage in sustainable tourism planning and management in the destination (OC)
9. AM.9 Avoid violation over key resources, including land and water rights, upon land and property acquisition (OC)
10. AM.10 Ensure accurate and transparent marketing communication and promotion material (OC)
11. AM.11 Avoid any form of greenwashing (OC)
12. AM.12 Avoid involuntary resettlement of residents (SC)

## **5.3. Criteria 2. Sustainable Use (SU)**

1. SU.1 Respect and comply with conservation zones, common protected areas, and customary rights (MC)
2. SU.2 Promote self-produced and local meat consumption; as well as avoiding endangered species for food (MC)
3. SU.3 Implement actions to combat the expected impacts of climate change; as well as to enhance climate resilience and adaptation (MC)
4. SU.4 Wildlife species are not harvested, consumed, displayed, improperly handled, sold, or traded, except as part of ecotourism regulated activities (MC)
5. SU.5 Follows appropriate guidelines for the management and promotion of visits to natural sites in order to minimize adverse impacts (MC)
6. SU.6 Implement waste reduction, encourage waste separation, storage, and responsible disposal (MC)
7. SU.7 Implement waste recycling (OC)

8. SU.8 Minimize greenhouse gas emission (OC)
9. SU.9 Encourage suppliers, visitors, and other stakeholders to use more energy-saving transportation options (OC)
10. SU.10 Use energy-savings and less-polluting vehicles whenever possible (OC)
11. SU.11 Obtain a third-party carbon-neutral certificate (OC)
12. SU.12 Takes actions to avoid the introduction of invasive species to the area of ecotourism operation (OC)
13. SU.13 Develop an appropriate management of biodiversity on its own property, especially if it is located in natural protected and high biodiversity value areas (SC)
14. SU.14 No species of wild animal is exploited for tourism purposes (SC)
15. SU.15 Ensure sustainable water sourcing and proper water treatment to minimize water risks (SC)

#### **5.4. Criteria 3. Safeguarding (SG)**

1. SG.1 Leverage cultural and spiritual assets and values in interpretation plans to enhance respect and responsible use (MC)
2. SG.2 Maintain the originality and minimize the degradation of local heritage in favor of business development (MC)
3. SG.3 Support and contribute to cultural preservation (MC)
4. SG.4 Ensure access for local residents in public area (MC)
5. SG.5 Historical and archaeological artefacts are not sold, traded or displayed, except as permitted by local and international law (OC)
6. SG.6 Design and construct facilities to reflect local architecture, conserve native species, minimize impacts, and protect natural and cultural heritage (SC)

#### **5.5. Criteria 4. Community Welfare (CW)**

1. CW.1 Prioritize local, eco-friendly and fair-trade suppliers (MC)
2. CW.2 Has implemented an operator policy against commercial, sexual, employment of minors or any other form of harassment or deprivation of human rights according to local law and regulations (MC)
3. CW.3 Respect labor right and provide safe and secure working environment with minimum wage according to the authorities (MC)
4. CW.4 Provide equal opportunity and advancement for local residents without any discriminations and aligned with the local law and policy, and offer regular training (MC)

5. CW. 5 Supports local entrepreneurs in the development and sale of sustainable products and services (MC)
6. CW.6 Activities do not jeopardize the provision of basic services and local livelihood (MC)
7. CW. 7 Actively supports initiatives for local infrastructure and social community development (OC)

#### **5.6. Criteria 5. Stakeholder Awareness (SA)**

1. SA.1 Engage local stakeholders to actively participate in ecotourism activities and its implementations of the activities (MC)
2. SA.2 Provide guidance to stakeholders to encourage their roles and responsibilities in sustaining benefits of ecotourism (MC)
3. SA.3 Provide educational activities, which offer nature and culture interpretation using effective media for stakeholders (OC)

#### **5.7. Criteria 6. Leveraging Appreciation (LA)**

1. LA.1 Provide high-quality interpretation media on natural and cultural resources (MC)
2. LA.2 Provide interpretation and storytelling that lead to positive behavioral change toward ecotourism (MC)
3. LA.3 Utilize digital technology for enhancing the quality of interpretation (OC)
4. LA.4 Ensure long-term succession of interpretation skills and technique (OC)

#### **5.8. Criteria 7. Quality Experience (QE)**

1. QE.1 Develop unique and value-added ecotourism products (MC)
2. QE.2 Offer hygienic and variety of local foods & beverages (MC)
3. QE.3 Provide access and information for persons with special needs, where appropriate (MC)
4. QE 4 Welcome guests without any discrimination (OC)
5. QE.5 Provide a clear and accurate information on the accessibility (OC)
6. QE.6 Respect and incorporate authentic elements of traditional and contemporary local culture (OC)
7. QE.7 Monitor customer satisfaction levels and community acceptance; and take necessary corrective actions (OC)

8. QE.8 Prepare and implement Standard Operation Procedures and guidelines for each type of activity offered to visitors (SC)
9. QE.9 Deliver authentic cultural exchanges between communities and visitors in a sensitive and respectful manner (SC)
10. QE. 10 Communicate the ecotourism products (SC)

#### **5.9. Criteria 8. Partnership and Collaboration (PC)**

1. PC.1 Establish collaboration with relevant stakeholders in various aspects of ecotourism development (MC)
2. PC.2 Ensure effective partnership by sharing resources, risks, and benefits (OC)

#### **5.10. Criteria 9. Safety & Security (SS)**

1. SS.1 Ensure comfort, safety, and security of visitors and staff (MC)
2. SS.2 Identify and address the risk factors that may cause health or safety hazards (MC)
3. SS.3 Develop crisis management plan and emergency protocol for stakeholders (MC)
4. SS.4 Implement all legally required measures against infectious diseases (MC)
5. SS.5 Prepare and train staff to address disaster and emergency (OC)
6. SS.6 Ensure safety and security of the location and its immediate surroundings (OC)

### **6. Recognition and Certification Scheme**

The Standard comprises 3 (three) levels of criteria that indicate which criterion needs to be fulfilled. The number of criteria for each level is described below:

**Table I. 2 Levels of Criteria**

<b>No</b>	<b>Levels of Criteria</b>	<b>No. of Criteria</b>
1.	Mandatory Criteria	35
2.	Optional Criteria	22
3.	Specific Criteria	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>

The criteria will have a weightage, which is a measurement used to determine the importance of each level of the criteria in the assessment. The general weightage values are:

**Table I. 3 Weight Value**

No	Levels of Criteria	Weight	
		Full Compliance	Partial Compliance
1.	Mandatory Criteria	1,0	0,5
2.	Optional Criteria	0,5	No point
3.	Specific Criteria	1,0	0,5

### The Certification Scheme

For the first year, the applicant will have to obtain full compliance over 35 mandatory criteria to be certified. For the second year, in addition to the previously fulfilled criteria, the applicant should also take 2 criteria out of the 22 optional criteria. Thus, the applicant will have to obtain full compliance over 37 mandatory criteria. The same mechanism continues in the following years. The scheme is described in the table below.

**Table I. 4 Certification Scheme**

Year	Number of Mandatory Criteria	Qualification to be Certified	
Year 01	35	100% compliance over <b>35</b> MC	certified year 01
Year 02	37 (35 of previous year MC plus 2 of OC)	100% compliance over <b>37</b> MC	certified year 02
Year 03 onwards	39 (37 of previous year plus 2 of OC)	100% compliance over <b>39</b> MC	certified year 03

Remark: The same mechanism continues in the following years

If the applicant cannot reach the 100% compliance of the Mandatory Criteria, the certification proposes the Recognition Scheme.

### Recognition Scheme

The recognition scheme is designed to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of operators who are actively pursuing certification in ecotourism. By implementing this scheme, operators will be recognized for their achievement by improving their skills, knowledge, and overall practices concerning sustainability. This scheme will provide appreciation for the efforts being made by the operators seeking a certification and encourage them to improve. The scheme is described in the table below.

**Table I. 5 Recognition Scheme**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Mandatory Criteria in compliance</b>	<b>Qualification to be Certified</b>	<b>Recognition</b>
Year 01	35 [all]	100% compliance over 35 criteria	certified
	32 [out of 35]	90% of no of mandatory criteria	gold
	25 [out of 35]	70%	silver
	18 [out of 35]	50%	bronze
the following year after Year 01 certification	37 [all]	100% compliance over 37 criteria	certified
	34 [out of 37]	90% of no of mandatory criteria	gold
	26 [out of 37]	70%	silver
	19 [out of 37]	50%	bronze
the following years onwards	39 [all]	100% compliance over 39 criteria	certified

Remark: The same mechanism continues in the following years

This acknowledgment will serve as both a motivational tool and a benchmark for their progress, encouraging them to strive for higher standards and certification level that contribute positively to the well-being of the environment, culture, and local communities.

## 7. Table of Criteria and Indicator

Note: MC is Mandatory Criteria; OC is Optional Criteria; SC is Specific Criteria

A is Activities; F is Facilities; S is Services

### 7.1. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 1. Adaptive Management

Criteria		Level	A	F	S	Indicator(s)	
AM.1	Reinvest profits from ecotourism development to maintain the quality of natural and cultural resources	MC	v	v	v	AM.1.1	Availability of document showing both natural and cultural resources or inventories
						AM.1.2	Availability of document showing which resources are reinvested (i.e. reinvestment plan)
AM.2	Implement a long term and comprehensive sustainability management system for continuous improvement	MC	v	v	v	AM.2.1	Availability of document showing sustainable management system
						AM.2.2	Availability of sustainability monitoring report to the public
						AM.2.3	The latest year and the interval (i.e., 5-10 years) of the sustainability monitoring report
AM.3	Encourage purchasing policies favor environmentally-friendly suppliers and products subject to local market conditions	MC	v	v	v	AM.3.1	Availability of policy/program to favor environmentally-friendly suppliers and products
						AM.3.2	Availability of documented evidence
AM.4	Respect and abide by local, national, and international legislation and regulations	MC	v	v	v	AM.4.1	Availability of document such as business permit, certificate, approval note by respected authority
AM.5	Respect and observe guidance/guidelines on tourism activities at local and traditional communities, as well as spiritually,	MC	v	v	v	AM.5.1	Availability of document or media with guidance/guidelines for tourism activities

	culturally and historically sensitive sites						
AM.6	Inform visitors about sustainable options for facilities, activities, and services, within the destination	MC	v	v	v	AM.6.1	Availability of information on sustainable options in the most relevant languages
AM.7	Actively engage in efficient purchasing and consumption to minimize waste	MC	v	v	v	AM.7.1	Proof of evidence of the purchase and the reduction of waste
AM.8	Actively engage in sustainable tourism planning and management in the destination	OC	v	v	v	AM.8.1	Availability of the operator policy or regulation, that indicates the engagement in sustainable tourism planning or management in the destination.
AM.9	Avoid violation over key resources, including land and water rights, upon land and property acquisition	OC	v	v	v	AM.9.1	Availability of company policy that guarantee user and access rights to resources that align with laws and regulations
AM.10	Ensure accurate and transparent marketing communication and promotion materials	OC	v	v	v	AM.10.1	Availability of marketing communication material
AM.11	Avoid any form of greenwashing	OC	v	v	v	AM.11.1	Availability of the operator policy or proof of commitment against greenwashing
						AM.11.1	Availability of the documents or media about promotional material that do not contain greenwashing
AM.12	Avoid involuntary resettlement of residents	SC		v		AM.12.1	Availability of the operator policy/program to avoid involuntary resettlement of residents
						AM.12.2	Availability of operator policy/program to compensate the residents who may be affected by resettlement

**7.2. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 2. Sustainable Use**

Criteria		Level	A	F	S	Indicator(s)	
SU.1	Respect and comply with conservation zones, common protected areas, and customary rights	MC	v	v	v	SU.1.1	Availability of planning documents with zoning according to designation
SU.2	Promote self-produced and local meat consumption; as well as avoiding endangered species for food	MC	v	v	v	SU.2.1	Availability of the operator policy and/or evidences promoting the use of self-produced and local meat and provisions on providing protected species for food
SU.3	Implement actions to combat the expected impacts of climate change; as well as to enhance climate resilience and adaptation	MC	v	v	v	SU.3.1	Availability of the operator policy on climate change
						SU.3.2	Availability of the list of actions in reducing and adapting climate change including energy conservation and renewable energy
SU.4	Wildlife species are not harvested, consumed, displayed, improperly handled, sold, or traded, except as part of ecotourism regulated activities	MC	v	v	v	SU.4.1	Availability of the operator policy on sustainable utilization of wildlife species
						SU.4.2	Availability of the list of activities using wildlife species
SU.5	Follows appropriate guidelines for the management and promotion of visits to natural sites in order to minimize adverse impacts	MC	v	v	v	SU.5.1	Availability of the guideline for the management and promotion on visits to natural sites
						SU.5.2	Availability of the list of where the guidelines are implemented
SU.6	Implement waste reduction, encourage waste separation, storage, and responsible disposal	MC	v	v	v	SU.6.1	Prevents the use of disposables (especially single-use plastic/bottles) and offers reusable alternatives instead
						SU.6.2	Waste, including food waste, is measured and mechanisms are in place to reduce waste
						SU.6.3	Waste is safely stored, separated, and disposed of in a responsible manner, with no adverse effect on the local population or the environment
						SU.6.4	Responsible oil storage, recycle, re-use, and disposal of engine oil. Ensures no oil is spilled into the (ground) water

SU.7	Implement waste recycling	OC	v	v	v	SU.7.1	Promote reuse or recycle waste where reduction is not feasible
						SU.7.2	Actively organizes or participates in recycling actions which go beyond basic waste separation
SU.8	Minimize greenhouse gas emission	OC	v	v	v	SU.8.1	Availability of the operator policy on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions
						SU.8.2	Availability of the list of energy efficiency practices and technologies to reduce energy
SU.9	Encourage suppliers, visitors, and other stakeholders to use more energy-saving transportation options	OC	v	v	v	SU.9.1	Availability of the operator policy on energy saving transportation options
SU.10	Use energy-savings and less-polluting vehicles whenever possible	OC	v	v	v	SU.10.1	Availability of the operator policy on less-polluting vehicles
						SU.10.2	Availability of the list of less-polluting vehicles
SU.11	Obtain a third-party carbon neutral certificate	OC	v	v	v	SU.11.1	Availability of the third-party certificate of carbon neutrality
SU.12	Takes actions to avoid the introduction of invasive species to the area of ecotourism operation	OC	v	v	v	SU.12.1	Availability of the operator policy to identify and avoid the introduction of the invasive species
						SU.12.2	Availability of the monitoring report on the invasive species
SU.13	Develop an appropriate management of biodiversity on its own property, especially if it is located in natural protected and high biodiversity value areas	SC		v		SU.13.1	Availability of the planning document containing mitigating impacts on habitat, wildlife from facilities development and tourism activities
						SU.13.2	Availability of the report on monitoring of endangered species conditions
SU.14	No species of wild animal is exploited for tourism purposes	SC		v	v	SU.14.1	Availability of the operator policy on avoiding exploitation of wild animals
						SU.14.2	Availability of the list of activities using wild animals and its purpose

SU.15	Ensure sustainable water sourcing and proper water treatment to minimize water risks	SC		v	v	SU.15.1	Availability of the operator policy on sustainable water sourcing and proper water treatment
						SU.15.2	Availability of the list of actions taken about water sourcing and water treatment
						SU.15.3	Availability of the public monitoring report on water use and treatment

### 7.3. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 3. Safeguarding

Criteria		Level	A	F	S	Indicator(s)	
SG.1	Leverage cultural and spiritual assets and values in interpretation plans to enhance respect and responsible use	MC	v	v	v	SG.1.1	Availability of the document on the interpretation plans, showing both cultural and spiritual assets
SG.2	Maintain the originality and minimize the degradation of local heritage in favor of business development	MC	v	v	v	SG.2.1	Availability of the operator policy or report/program on local heritage protection
						SG.2.2	Availability of the list/inventory of local heritage (both tangible and intangible); or refer to web-source
SG.3	Support and contribute to cultural preservation	MC	v	v	v	SG.3.1	Availability of the operator policy and the actions taken aimed at the preservation of culture and its support
SG.4	Ensure access for local residents in public area	MC	v	v	v	SG.4.1	Availability of the operator policy ensuring that local resident access rights are protected
SG.5	Historical and archaeological artefacts are not sold, traded or displayed, except as permitted by local and international law	OC	v	v	v	SG.5.1	Availability of the operator policy aimed at the protection of historical and archaeological artefacts
SG.6	Design and construct facilities to reflect local architecture, conserve native species, minimize impacts, and protect natural and cultural heritage	SC		v		SG.6.1	Availability of the operator policy aimed at reflecting local culture, conserving native species
						SG.6.2	Reflect traditional art and crafts in design and furnishings

**7.4. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 4. Community Welfare**

Criteria		Level	A	F	S	Indicator(s)	
CW.1	Prioritize local, eco-friendly and fair-trade suppliers	MC	v	v	v	CW.1.1	Availability of the list of all suppliers that include local, eco-friendly, and fair-trade suppliers, and the effort is being made to improve their proportion
						CW.1.2	Proof of purchase order from the local, eco-friendly, and fair-trade suppliers
CW.2	Has implemented an operator policy against commercial, sexual, employment of minors or any other form of harassment or deprivation of human rights according to local law and regulations	MC	v	v	v	CW.2.1	Availability of the operator policy against commercial, sexual, employment of minors or any other form of harassment or deprivation of human rights
						CW.2.2	Implementation of this policy (if any) by you and your staffs
CW.3	Respect labor right and provide safe and secure working environment with minimum wage according to the authorities	MC	v	v	v	CW.3.1	Provision of acceptable wage based on the minimum wage set by the authority
						CW.3.2	Follow all building regulations, safety regulations, and safeguards to ensure safe and secure working environment for staff and local residents
						CW.3.3	Provision of health benefits or any means as mitigation for any incidents
CW.4	Provide equal opportunity and advancement for local residents without any discriminations and aligned with the local law and policy, and offer regular training	MC	v	v	v	CW.4.1	Provision of employment opportunities for local residents
						CW.4.2	Recruitment process which ensures no discrimination by their gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or any other ways; that aligned with the local law and policy
						CW.4.3	Provision of training opportunities for local staff
CW.5	Supports local entrepreneurs in the development and sale of sustainable products and services	MC	v	v	v	CW.5.1	Support for local entrepreneurs in the development and sale of sustainable products and services

CW.6	Activities do not jeopardize the provision of basic services and local livelihood	MC	v	v	v	CW.6.1	Measures to limit the negative impact or obstruction of your operation to the provision of basic services [water, electricity] and local livelihood
CW.7	Actively supports initiatives for local infrastructure and social community development	OC	v	v	v	CW.7.1	Support local initiatives for social community development or any other local infrastructure projects

**7.5. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 5. Stakeholder Awareness**

Criteria		Level	A	F	S	Indicator	
SA.1	Engage local stakeholders to actively participate in ecotourism development and its implementation of the activities	MC	v	v	v	SA.1.1	Engagement of local stakeholders including communities in the ecotourism development and implementation
SA.2	Provide guidance to stakeholders to encourage their roles and responsibility in sustaining benefits of ecotourism	MC	v	v	v	SA.2.1	Availability of the guidance including stakeholders' roles and responsibility
SA.3	Provide educational activities, which offer nature and culture interpretation using effective media for stakeholders	OC	v	v	v	SA.3.1	Availability of educational activities for local stakeholders on nature and culture interpretation

**7.6. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 6. Leveraging Appreciation**

Criteria		Level	A	F	S	Indicator	
LA.1	Provide high-quality interpretation media on natural and cultural resources	MC	v	v	v	LA.1.1	Availability of attractive, clear, and concise sign made with sustainable material that conveys updated and accurate interpretation
						LA.1.2	Availability of regular maintenance and report of the conditions of the interpretation signs

LA.2	Provide interpretation and storytelling that lead to positive behavioral change toward ecotourism	MC	v	v	v	LA.2.1	Provision of the current and accurate contents, and easy to understand leading to visitors' responsible behavior
LA.3	Utilize digital technology for enhancing the quality of interpretation	OC	v	v	v	LA.3.1	Provision of the digital interpretation
LA.4	Ensure long-term succession of interpretation skills and technique	OC	v	v	v	LA.4.1	Provision of the opportunity for long-term succession for guides/interpreters

**7.7. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 7. Quality Experience**

Criteria		Level	A	F	S	Indicator	
QE.1	Develop unique and value-added ecotourism products	MC	v	v	v	QE.1.1	Availability of the ecotourism products showcasing their uniqueness and values
						QE.1.2	Availability of the document showing limits on visitor group size and visit frequency that are implemented to minimize negative impacts
QE.2	Offer hygienic and variety of local foods & beverages	MC	v	v	v	QE.2.1	Availability of the food and products offered complies with hygiene and safety standards throughout processing and serving
						QE.2.2	Availability of a variety of local food and beverage offerings reflects the authenticity and representation of the local culture
QE.3	Provides access and information for persons with special needs, where appropriate	MC	v	v	v	QE.3.1	Availability of clear and accurate information on facilities and services accessible by persons with special needs (e.g., Braille, large print, wheelchair access, website, promotional materials, sign language interpreters)
						QE.3.2	Availability of physical accessibility features/structures except in areas where topography, climate and other environmental limitations exist (e.g., Braille, wheelchair and hearing aid rentals)

QE.4	Welcome visitors without any discrimination	MC	v	v	v	QE.4.1	Availability of the Standard Operation Procedure include Non-discrimination policy against visitors
						QE.4.2	Availability of complaint records and actions are taken based on the complaints for improvement (i.e. feedback form plus action taken based on the feedback)
QE.5	Provide a clear and accurate information on the accessibility	MC	v	v	v	QE.5.1	Availability of a clear and accurate information on the levels of accessibility
						QE.5.2	Availability of information through multiple media channels and formats, presented clearly and accurately using simple language and visual aids (e.g., maps, photo)
QE.6	Respect and incorporate authentic elements of traditional and contemporary local culture	OC	v	v	v	QE.6.1	Availability of the document showing the incorporation of authentic traditional and contemporary local cultural elements into operations
QE.7	Monitor customer satisfaction levels and community acceptance; and take necessary corrective actions	OC	v	v	v	QE.7.1	Availability of the records on monitoring customer satisfaction and community acceptance, as well as any corrective actions taken
QE.8	Prepare and implement Standard Operation Procedures and guidelines for each type of activity offered to visitors	SC	v		v	QE.8.1	Availability of the Standard Operation Procedures and guidelines for ecotourism activities offered to visitors
QE.9	Deliver authentic cultural exchanges between communities and visitors in a sensitive and respectful manner	SC	v		v	QE.9.1	Availability of the documents showing that interactive programs facilitate authentic and respectful cultural exchanges among communities and visitors
QE.10	Communicate the ecotourism products	SC	v	v		QE.10.1	Availability of the list of marketing channels for the ecotourism products
						QE.10.2	Availability of the promotional materials (brochures, flyers, website content)

**7.8. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 8. Partnership and Collaboration**

Criteria		Level	A	F	S	Indicator(s)	
PC.1	Establish collaboration with relevant stakeholders in various aspects of ecotourism development	MC	v	v	v	PC.1.1	Availability of collaboration with relevant stakeholders that indicate the aspect of ecotourism development (i.e. NGO, educational institutions, media, communities, etc.)
PC.2	Ensure effective partnership by sharing resources, risks, and benefits	OC	v	v	v	PC.2.1	Availability of the proof showing effective partnership by sharing resources, risks, and benefits
						PC.2.2	Availability of the evaluation report about the partnership to enhance the effectiveness

**7.9. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 9. Safety and Security**

Criteria		Level	A	F	S	Indicator(s)	
SS.1	Ensure comfort, safety, and security of visitors and staff	MC	v	v	v	SS.1.1	Availability of the operator policy to ensure comfort, safety, and security of visitors and staff
						SS.1.2	Availability of the safety briefings and guidelines for visitors and staff
SS.2	Identify and address the risk factors that may cause health or safety hazards	MC	v	v	v	SS.2.1	Availability of the list of identified potential health and safety hazards into multiple levels and their actions taken
SS.3	Develop crisis management plan and emergency protocol for stakeholders	MC	v	v	v	SS.3.1	Availability of the crisis management plans and emergency protocol to prepare for and handle various types of disasters (i.e., earthquakes, floods, fires, medical emergencies)
SS.4	Implement all legally required measures against infectious diseases	MC	v	v	v	SS.4.1	Availability of list of actions to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases
						SS.4.2	Availability of health and safety measures by relevant authorities and certification of compliance

ASEAN Ecotourism Standard

SS.5	Prepare and train staff to address disaster and emergency	OC	v	v	v	SS.5.1	Availability of the document on training program and a safety manual, as well as the list of trained staff for disaster and emergency
SS.6	Ensure safety and security of the location and its immediate surroundings	OC	v	v	v	SS.6.1	Availability of the relevant signage, personal protection equipment, and clear evacuation points to ensure safety and security measure in the area



## Section II

# AUDIT AND CERTIFICATION MANUAL

## 2024



## **Section II. Audit and Certification Manual**

### **1. Foreword**

This document is aimed to be used as a manual for the audit and certification scheme of ASEAN Ecotourism Standard (AECOS). It includes a discussion of the auditing principles and guidelines as well as certification procedures so that ecotourism operators can be certified by using the AECOS. The major criteria and requirements contained within this manual are based on the ASEAN Member States (AMS)-approved ASEAN Ecotourism Standard (AECOS). The audit and the certification scheme will allow ecotourism entities within ASEAN member states to develop their capabilities to attract more businesses while improving the level of sustainability in their operations.

### **2. Introduction**

The formulation of the ASEAN Ecotourism Standard (AECOS) and a Certification Body (CB) is essential in ensuring the successful implementation of the AECOS. This manual provides a comprehensive description of the assessment process, the parties responsible for managing and conducting such process as well as the benefits that ecotourism operators can expect to receive upon successfully certified or recognized under the AECOS. In addition to the certification and recognition process, this manual aims to help train assessors with the knowledge and skills required in making accurate and fair assessments of each criterion of the AECOS as well as the systematic implementation and management of the AECOS.

### **3. Scope**

This manual comprises of:

1. A structure and roles of the certification body (CB) responsible for the implementation of the ASEAN Ecotourism Standard (AECOS)
2. An assessment guide as a reference and standard operating procedure in making ASEAN Ecotourism Standard (AECOS) assessment

### **4. Terms and Definition**

The terms and definitions in this manual are as follows:

#### **4.1. ASEAN Member States (AMS)**

ASEAN Member States or AMS refers to member countries of the Association of the Southeast Asia Nations. This refers to Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

## 4.2. ASEAN Ecotourism Standards (AECOS)

ASEAN Ecotourism Standards is the ASEAN standard in ecotourism, which covers 3 categories, namely (1) Activities (2) Facilities, and (3) Service. ASEAN Ecotourism Standards comprises 2 (two) levels of criteria that indicate which criterion needs to be fulfilled.

## 4.3. National Tourism Organization

A governmental institution that plans and manages tourism development and promotion at a national level or equivalent.

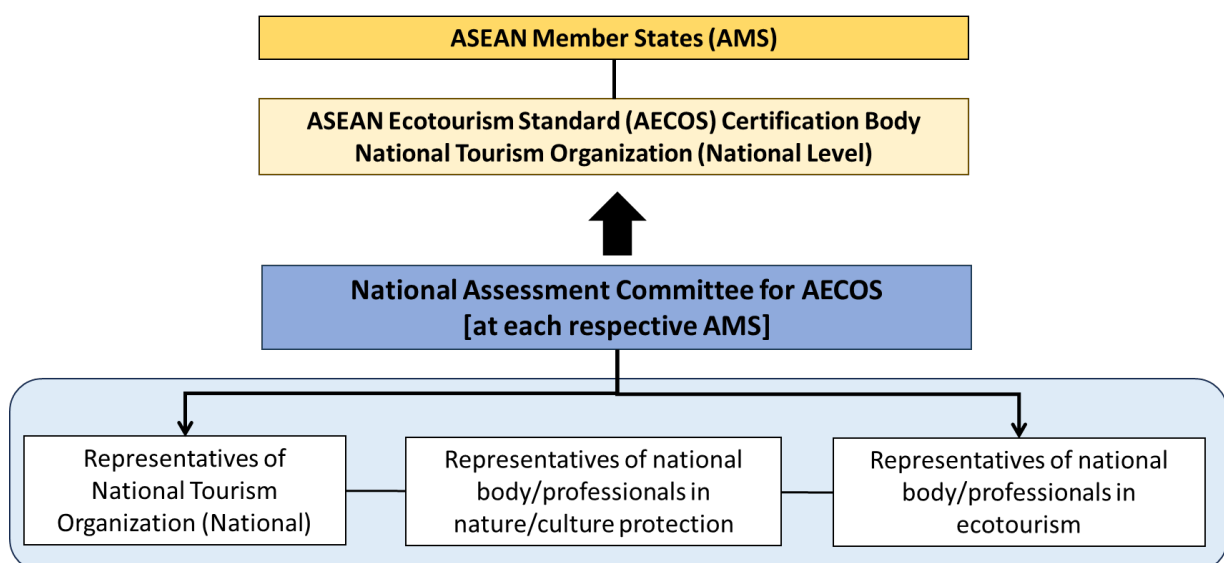
## 4.4. National Assessment Committee for AECOS

The National Assessment Committee refers to a certification body (CB) that executes the registration, auditing, and certification process for ecotourism operators in the ASEAN member states.

## 5. Proposed Certification Body

The proposed certification body (CB) will facilitate the certification of the ASEAN Ecotourism Standard (AECOS) in each respective AMS. It will not, nevertheless, be responsible for the implementation of the Standard itself. The management of the dissemination and the promotion of the AECOS to ecotourism operators will fall under the responsibility of each respective AMS.

Each respective AMS is expected to form a National Assessment Committee which will become the ASEAN Ecotourism Standard (AECOS) Certification Body. The proposed organization structure is as follows (Diagram II.1).



**Diagram II. 1 Organization Structure of AECOS Certification Body**

There are 3(three) types of organizations proposed to form a certification body, which are:

- Representatives of National Tourism Organization at each respective AMS or equivalent

Examples of agencies from AMS which could be included in the National Assessment Committee for AECOS are (1) Ministry of Tourism or equivalent; (2) government-led tourism board, (3) government-led tourism promotion board, and/or (4) ecotourism-specific board. Due to the varying structures of government in each respective ASEAN country, the responsible agencies may differ from country to country. However, it is important that the selection of the members in the National Assessment Committee must not lead to a conflict of interest with the applicants or ecotourism operators undergoing the audit for AECOS.

- Representatives of national body or related Ministries or professionals in natural and/or cultural protection

It is recommended to have a national level body or professional with focus and technical expertise in natural conservation and cultural preservation at their respective AMS, in the National Assessment Committee for AECOS.

- Representatives of national body or professionals in ecotourism

It is recommended to have a national level body or professional with focus and technical expertise in ecotourism, global sustainable tourism standards, and certification processes, in the National Assessment Committee for AECOS.

Each organization in the structure has different responsibilities according to their position and expertise in the ASEAN Ecotourism Standard Certification Body.

**Table II. 1 Responsibilities of Organizations**

No	Organization	Responsibilities
1	National Tourism Organization at ASEAN Member States (AMS)	Responsibilities:
		1 Promote the AECOS and the and certified/recognized operators; as well as encouraging the ecotourism operators to participate in the scheme
		2 Set up the National Assessment Committee for AECOS at its respective AMS
		3 Identify the certifiers and coordinate the process of registration
		4 Act as a Chairperson of the National Assessment Committee. This includes chairing and participating in the screening of applications, inspection, auditing, preparation of assessment report, and concluding the final result of the audit.
5 Manage the update and renewal of the certification		

		6	In case the application is submitted on paper, assist ecotourism operators at their respective AMS to submit it to the online-platform
2	National body/professional in natural and/or cultural protection	Responsibilities:	
		1	Become a member in the National Assessment Committee for AECOS at its respective AMS
		2	Promote of the standard to ecotourism operators
		3	Participate in the screening of applications, inspection, auditing and preparation of assessment reports.
3	National body/professional in ecotourism	Responsibilities:	
		1	Become a member in the National Assessment Committee for AECOS at its respective AMS
		2	Promote of the standard to ecotourism operators
		3	Participate in the screening of applications, inspection, auditing and preparation of assessment reports.

## 6. Certification of ASEAN Ecotourism Standards

### 6.1. The Initiation Process

The initiation process will include setting up the National Assessment Committee for the ASEAN Ecotourism Standard (AECOS).

1. National tourism organization at each AMS nominates a person / an organization versed in ecotourism or sustainable tourism with a formal document to become a committee member. A person can be designated by name or by the position of responsibility.
2. The other member candidates nominate a person / an organization with a formal writing addressed to NTO at each respective AMS to become a committee member.
3. Upon approval, the National tourism organization at each AMS informs the ASEAN Secretariat on the National Assessment Committee and its selected member.
4. NTO and the ASEAN Secretariat inaugurated the Committee.

### 6.2. Auditor Development Process

1. The National Assessment Committee at each AMS selects the independent auditors for implementing the audit process based on the ASEAN Ecotourism Standard.
2. The selected individuals should follow a training for auditor on the ASEAN Ecotourism Standard.

### 6.3. The Recognition and Certification Process

The recognition and certification process will be conducted by the National Assessment Committee following 10(ten) steps of certification. The Certification is to certify its full compliance of the Mandatory Criteria; while the Recognition is to recognize its compliance of the levels of the Mandatory Criteria. The Steps are described below:

### **Step 1 Awareness Raising of Stakeholders**

Disseminate information about the AECOS and the certification process to ecotourism operators. This process should be led by the NTO of each respective AMS.

### **Step 2 Registration**

The applicants complete the registration forms. After receiving the application package (the application form and the self-assessment report), the Committee reviews if the application is complete and meets the prerequisite entry requirements. The technical check is not meant to judge compliance. Once the application is reviewed and approved by the Committee, the access to the online self-assessment platform will be provided to the applicants.

### **Step 3 Self-Assessment and Reporting**

The applicants conduct the self-assessment by responding to the required criteria and indicators, as well as uploading evidence to the on-line platform.

### **Step 4 Online Coaching**

Online coaching is conducted by a coach, which can be assigned to assist the applicants upon request. If a coach is assigned, then he/she should check the applicants' self-assessment prior to the audit and confirm its completion for the audit. If it is incomplete, the applicants should improve again until it is completed. The coach can perform a maximum 2-time check for each applicant. If it is complete, the applicants can request an onsite audit.

### **Step 5 Onsite Audit**

Onsite audit will be conducted by an independent auditor assigned by the Committee. It will be conducted with top management of the operators, staff, and supplier interviews, and other parties as required; with prior notice and observation. If partial or non-compliance on the criteria are found, all required fields must be filled in until they are compliant following these 2(two) steps:

- i. if minor, decide on the date of the compliance,
- ii. if major, certification process is stopped until all required fields are in compliance

### **Step 6 Audit Report and Final judgment**

If the auditor has finished the audit, then an Audit Report is generated. The final judgment is made by the Committee based on the audit report to grant the certification or the recognition level to be granted for the applicants.

### **Step 7 Confirmation of Final judgment**

Inform the applicants of the audit report through the platform. The applicants should provide confirmation upon this result.

### Step 8 Issuance and Announcement of Certification

Upon the confirmation from the applicants, the platform can generate the certification which shows the name of the ecotourism operators, address, standard version, date of validity, date of expiration, certificate number, level of compliance of the recognition and the certification. The Committee shall make a public announcement on the issuance of recognition and certification.

### Step 9 Promotion of the Certified Operators

Promote the ecotourism operators who are either certified or recognized.

### Step 10 Monitoring

Check standard maintenance at least every two years. Check the use of the logo, and certificate.

## 6.4. The Online Platform for Assessment

The ASEAN Ecotourism Standard will have an online platform for self-assessment. The platform will have two gateways; which are for the applicant and for internal service such as administration purposes, coach, and auditor. Each ecotourism operator will obtain an individual account and secure access to the online platform once their registration has been reviewed and approved by the National Assessment Committee of AECOS.

## 6.5. The Entry Requirement

Before an assessment is conducted, the National Assessment Committee for AECOS should ensure that all applicants meet the prerequisite entry requirements. If the requirements are insufficient, then the applicants will be notified to complete it. If they are unable to do so within a certain period of time, the ecotourism operators will be immediately disqualified from applying for the certification. A list of prerequisite entry requirements is shown in Table II.2 below.

**Table II. 2 Entry Requirements of Ecotourism Operators**

No	Qualification of Entry	Means of Verification / Required Evidence
1.	The ecotourism operators must be registered according to the local law at one of ASEAN Member States	Proof of registration at respective AMS, with the submitted application form. When the business registration document is not in English, the applicant can attach a certified translated document or to have an endorsement letter by NTO

2.	The ecotourism operators applying for certification must operate for at least 12 months.	Photocopy the certificate/relevant documents and attach it with the application form
----	--	--

## 7. Validation Period

The proposed validation period for the ASEAN Ecotourism Standard (AECOS) Certification is 2 years. Certified ecotourism operators are requested to update their performance every year before they will be reassessed every 2(two) years to renew their certificates. This will enable the National Tourism Organization to update and monitor the performance of certified ecotourism operators to ensure that they maintain their quality and standard as specified in AECOS.

## 8. Benefits and Privileges

The proposed benefits and privileges of being certified as an ASEAN Ecotourism Standard holder are mostly related to better access to marketing and promotional programmes carried out by the related government agencies. Essentially, certified ecotourism operators will benefit from the branding of AECOS which is an international recognition. The detailed benefits of certification, though they may vary between ASEAN countries, are as follows:

- Issued with an ASEAN Ecotourism Standard certificate to be displayed on the premises and a logo for on-line and other media usage
- Promoted in the ASEAN Organization Official website (<http://www.asean.org>)
- Promoted at ASEAN and international tourism events, festivals, and forums
- Priority listing on National Tourism Organization’s websites and brochures
- Priority given to participate in national and international tourism fairs organized by National Tourism Organizations

## 9. Certification Logo

The certification logo for the ASEAN Ecotourism Standards is as below:



**Image II. 1 Certification Logo**

The ASEAN Ecotourism Standard logo uses the standard ASEAN Tourism Standards logo for all certifications. The connotations of the logo are as below:

- Flower resembling to a lotus means a legendary plant, inducing luxurious enjoyment, peace and beauty, and a recognition of award and standardization of ASEAN Tourism Services
- Petals enfolding ASEAN logo signify resilience of Member Countries
- Different shades of green color mean protection of environment, fertility, growth, increase of production in tourism industry (Source: ASEAN Tourism Standards Book, 2007)

## **10. Auditing Process**

The National Assessment Committee in assessing and auditing ecotourism operators will require to comply with the procedures as follows:

### **Procedure 1: Audit Preparation**

1. The Committee Check the applicant's self-assessment report in the online platform
  - All fields are filled with evidence that is uploaded; including photos, documents, links (no broken links allowed), etc.
  - Check if Not Applicable is adequately applied; which is only possible if: a) there is a n/a tick box; and b) the selection of the n/a is justifiable according to the guidance instructions
2. In case this is a reassessment application, the corrective action forms will be reviewed at this stage.

### **Procedure 2: Auditor Selection and Assignment**

1. The Committee shall select and assign an independent auditor.
2. The Committee selects the date and time for an audit. The Committee will communicate to the applicant and the auditor on the date and time of the audit in a written format and through the online platform.
3. The applicant and the auditor agree on a date to perform the audit (usually a full-day assignment)

### **Procedure 3: Self-Assessment Review**

1. The assigned auditor evaluates the online self-assessment and will place remarks for any identified inconsistencies, uncertainties, or incomplete answers.
2. The applicants will be provided certain time to complete the answers prior to onsite audit
3. The Auditor will conduct an assessment by an online interview, an inspection or a document review as stipulated in the AECOS Assessment Guidelines of this manual.

4. The Auditor will need to collect evidence which can be interview records (as well as names and positions of the interviewees), photographs or written comments and related documents.
5. If this is a reassessment, the auditor will reassess only issues which are required to.
6. An assessment must end with a discussion of the result, particularly major criteria gaining low scores. The auditor may ask and discuss with the applicant at this stage to clarify the issues.
7. The auditor must inform the National Assessment Committee upon the completion of the audit. The National Assessment Committee must conclude the online or first stage audit and inform the applicants that they can view the online audit results online.
8. In case there is partial compliance to the Mandatory Criteria, the applicants need to check, update as per requested by the audit result, until all required criteria are met.

#### **Procedure 4: Onsite Audit**

1. The applicant should develop and propose an audit itinerary in agreement with the auditor. The auditor should meet with the sustainability coordinator; and in addition to him/her, also with at least relevant staff for ecological, environmental, social, economic and cultural issues. In addition to this, if possible, the auditor should also meet:
  - If possible, a (vice) president or department director e.g., to discuss how sustainability is integrated in departments and management levels of the organization;
  - At least 2 external stakeholders (for example NGOs or associations) to hear their views on implementation of policies and enforcement of regulations. Ideally these are interviewed by phone prior to the onsite audit; so that their remarks can be presented to the sustainability coordinator, with a view to ensuring 'fair hearing';
2. The Committee arrange for the onsite audit together with the applicants
3. During the onsite audit, the Auditor shall visit a few sites of interest to evaluate compliance and implementation of policies and regulations – i.e. energy facility, company car/shuttle, waste management processing sites, natural area (entrance sites), visitor (information) center; etc. Based on the on-site audit the Auditor can make changes to the desk-audit and prepare final assessment.

#### **Procedure 5: An Audit Report**

1. The auditor is requested to draw up a final report (generated automatically from the online system) by providing a brief list of strongest points (best practices) for each of the 9 themes. The auditor should provide recommendations on:
  - Short term (within 1 year): missing information; missing documentation, easy achievable improvements;

- Mid-term (to prepare for the next audit in 2 years): development of new policies, plans, programmes and initiatives to address non compliances.
2. The audit report should be signed by the applicant and the auditor to show that both parties agree on the result of the audit report.

### **Procedure 6: National Assessment Committee Final Judgement**

The Assessment Committee reviews the full audit report. The final decisions are made based on the review of the audit report for the levels and the certification.

#### **11. Code of Conduct of the National Assessment Committee**

The committee members must adhere to the following Code of Conduct Rules:

1. Keep confidentiality on all the information acquired pre, during and post Audit
2. Refrain from communicating opinions or results throughout the assessment
3. Seek to maintain good professional relationships with stakeholders to promote free flow of information and be respectful throughout the entire Audit process
4. Accept NO GIFTS in any form from Auditee Organizations or affiliates.

#### **12. Suspension and Withdrawal of Certification**

##### **12.1. Suspension of certification**

In case the certified entity does not conduct in accordance with the procedure for assessment and certification of AECOS and does not correct the non-conformities and/or does not follow the regulations within the specified period of the validation of the AECOS, the National Assessment Committee shall inform the certified entity to implement corrective and preventive action. The certified entity shall implement corrective and preventive action effectively and shall be followed up by the National Assessment Committee for further audit within 60 days. If the corrective action is not undertaken within 60 days, the certification shall be withdrawn.

##### **12.2. Withdrawal of certification**

In case the certified entity falls in one or more of the following cases: 1) Not conform to the regulations that the Committee determines and have a severe effect on the certification; 2) Not conform to the essence of AECOS that is certified; 3) Not conform to AECOS that is certified after the certification is suspended two times within 180 days; and 4) Having the complaint that the Committee and/or the National Tourism Organization has considered that it might damage the certification. The Committee will proceed in endorsing a withdrawal of the certification and inform the AMS so that the certified entity shall return the certificate to the Committee.

## **13. Appeal and Complaint**

### **13.1. Appeal**

The appeal process can be described as follows:

1. The applicant of AECOS can appeal within 30 days from the date that the Committee sends the letter of informing the consideration result or the implementation for notification. The appeal shall be submitted to the Committee in writing.
2. The Committee shall appoint the appeal panel on a case-by-case basis to consider the appeal and inform the appellant of the result of consideration within 60 days from the date that the Committee receives the appeal.
3. During the consideration of the appeal which has not been terminated, the former result of the consideration is still effective.
4. The appeal panel's consideration result shall be deemed terminated.
5. The appellant shall be responsible for all costs of considering the appeal, except for the case that the appeal is effective.

### **13.2. Complaint**

For submitting the complaints, the complainant shall submit the complaint in writing, which can be verified and have enough evidence to support the complaint, to the Committee. When the Committee receives the complaint, it will consider the information received and might request additional evidence for considering whether it is the complaint or not and then officially notify the complainant of the consideration result.

In case of the complaint, the Committee will inform the relevant persons to analyze the cause, implement the corrective and preventive actions, and inform the outcome of the implementation to the complainant in writing.

## **14. Cancellation of Certification**

The Committee shall cancel the certification of AECOS if it is one of the following cases:

- The certified entity informs of the cancellation of certification in writing.
- The certified entity terminates the certified business.
- The certified entity is bankrupt.

**Appendix 1: ASEAN Ecotourism Standard for Activities**

**1. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 1. Adaptive Management**

Criteria		Level	A	Indicator(s)	
AM.1	Reinvest profits from ecotourism development to maintain the quality of natural and cultural resources	MC	v	AM.1.1	Availability of document showing both natural and cultural resources or inventories
				AM.1.2	Availability of document showing which resources are reinvested (i.e. reinvestment plan)
AM.2	Implement a long term and comprehensive sustainability management system for continuous improvement	MC	v	AM.2.1	Availability of document showing sustainable management system
				AM.2.2	Availability of sustainability monitoring report to the public
				AM.2.3	The latest year and the interval (i.e., 5-10 years) of the sustainability monitoring report
AM.3	Encourage purchasing policies favor environmentally-friendly suppliers and products subject to local market conditions	MC	v	AM.3.1	Availability of policy/program to favor environmentally-friendly suppliers and products
				AM.3.2	Availability of documented evidence
AM.4	Respect and abide by local, national, and international legislation and regulations	MC	v	AM.4.1	Availability of document such as business permit, certificate, approval note by respected authority
AM.5	Respect and observe guidance/guidelines on tourism activities at local and traditional communities, as well as spiritually, culturally and historically sensitive sites	MC	v	AM.5.1	Availability of document or media with guidance/guidelines for tourism activities
AM.6	Inform visitors about sustainable options for facilities, activities, and services, within the destination	MC	v	AM.6.1	Availability of information on sustainable options in the most relevant languages

AM.7	Actively engage in efficient purchasing and consumption to minimize waste	MC	v	AM.7.1	Proof of evidence of the purchase and the reduction of waste
AM.8	Actively engage in sustainable tourism planning and management in the destination	OC	v	AM.8.1	Availability of the operator policy or regulation, that indicates the engagement in sustainable tourism planning or management in the destination.
AM.9	Avoid violation over key resources, including land and water rights, upon land and property acquisition	OC	v	AM.9.1	Availability of company policy that guarantee user and access rights to resources that align with laws and regulations
AM.10	Ensure accurate and transparent marketing communication and promotion materials	OC	v	AM.10.1	Availability of marketing communication material
AM.11	Avoid any form of greenwashing	OC	v	AM.11.1	Availability of the operator policy or proof of commitment against greenwashing
				AM.11.1	Availability of the documents or media about promotional material that do not contain greenwashing

## 2. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 2. Sustainable Use

Criteria		Level	A	Indicator(s)	
SU.1	Respect and comply with conservation zones, common protected areas, and customary rights	MC	v	SU.1.1	Availability of planning documents with zoning according to designation
SU.2	Promote self-produced and local meat consumption; as well as avoiding endangered species for food	MC	v	SU.2.1	Availability of the operator policy and/or evidences promoting the use of self-produced and local meat and provisions on providing protected species for food
SU.3	Implement actions to combat the expected impacts of climate change; as well as to enhance climate resilience and adaptation	MC	v	SU.3.1	Availability of the operator policy on climate change
				SU.3.2	Availability of the list of actions in reducing and adapting climate change including energy conservation and renewable energy
SU.4	Wildlife species are not harvested, consumed, displayed, improperly handled,	MC	v	SU.4.1	Availability of the operator policy on sustainable utilization of wildlife species

	sold, or traded, except as part of ecotourism regulated activities			SU.4.2	Availability of the list of activities using wildlife species
SU.5	Follows appropriate guidelines for the management and promotion of visits to natural sites in order to minimize adverse impacts	MC	v	SU.5.1	Availability of the guideline for the management and promotion on visits to natural sites
				SU.5.2	Availability of the list of where the guidelines are implemented
SU.6	Implement waste reduction, encourage waste separation, storage, and responsible disposal	MC	v	SU.6.1	Prevents the use of disposables (especially single-use plastic/bottles) and offers reusable alternatives instead
				SU.6.2	Waste, including food waste, is measured and mechanisms are in place to reduce waste
				SU.6.3	Waste is safely stored, separated, and disposed of in a responsible manner, with no adverse effect on the local population or the environment
				SU.6.4	Responsible oil storage, recycle, re-use, and disposal of engine oil. Ensures no oil is spilled into the (ground) water
SU.7	Implement waste recycling	OC	v	SU.7.1	Promote reuse or recycle waste where reduction is not feasible
				SU.7.2	Actively organizes or participates in recycling actions which go beyond basic waste separation
SU.8	Minimize greenhouse gas emission	OC	v	SU.8.1	Availability of the operator policy on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions
				SU.8.2	Availability of the list of energy efficiency practices and technologies to reduce energy
SU.9	Encourage suppliers, visitors, and other stakeholders to use more energy-saving transportation options	OC	v	SU.9.1	Availability of the operator policy on energy saving transportation options
SU.10	Use energy-savings and less-polluting vehicles whenever possible	OC	v	SU.10.1	Availability of the operator policy on less-polluting vehicles
				SU.10.2	Availability of the list of less-polluting vehicles

SU.11	Obtain a third-party carbon neutral certificate	OC	v	SU.11.1	Availability of the third-party certificate of carbon neutrality
SU.12	Takes actions to avoid the introduction of invasive species to the area of ecotourism operation	OC	v	SU.12.1	Availability of the operator policy to identify and avoid the introduction of the invasive species
				SU.12.2	Availability of the monitoring report on the invasive species

### 3. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 3. Safeguarding

Criteria		Level	A	Indicator(s)	
SG.1	Leverage cultural and spiritual assets and values in interpretation plans to enhance respect and responsible use	MC	v	SG.1.1	Availability of the document on the interpretation plans, showing both cultural and spiritual assets
SG.2	Maintain the originality and minimize the degradation of local heritage in favor of business development	MC	v	SG.2.1	Availability of the operator policy or report/program on local heritage protection
				SG.2.2	Availability of the list/inventory of local heritage (both tangible and intangible); or refer to web-source
SG.3	Support and contribute to cultural preservation	MC	v	SG.3.1	Availability of the operator policy and the actions taken aimed at the preservation of culture and its support
SG.4	Ensure access for local residents in public area	MC	v	SG.4.1	Availability of the operator policy ensuring that local resident access rights are protected
SG.5	Historical and archaeological artefacts are not sold, traded or displayed, except as permitted by local and international law	OC	v	SG.5.1	Availability of the operator policy aimed at the protection of historical and archaeological artefacts

#### 4. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 4. Community Welfare

Criteria		Level	A	Indicator(s)	
CW.1	Prioritize local, eco-friendly and fair-trade suppliers	MC	v	CW.1.1	Availability of the list of all suppliers that include local, eco-friendly, and fair-trade suppliers, and the effort is being made to improve their proportion
				CW.1.2	Proof of purchase order from the local, eco-friendly, and fair-trade suppliers
CW.2	Has implemented an operator policy against commercial, sexual, employment of minors or any other form of harassment or deprivation of human rights according to local law and regulations	MC	v	CW.2.1	Availability of the operator policy against commercial, sexual, employment of minors or any other form of harassment or deprivation of human rights
				CW.2.2	Implementation of this policy (if any) by you and your staffs
CW.3	Respect labor right and provide safe and secure working environment with minimum wage according to the authorities	MC	v	CW.3.1	Provision of acceptable wage based on the minimum wage set by the authority
				CW.3.2	Follow all building regulations, safety regulations, and safeguards to ensure safe and secure working environment for staff and local residents
				CW.3.3	Provision of health benefits or any means as mitigation for any incidents
CW.4	Provide equal opportunity and advancement for local residents without any discriminations and aligned with the local law and policy, and offer regular training	MC	v	CW.4.1	Provision of employment opportunities for local residents
				CW.4.2	Recruitment process which ensures no discrimination by their gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or any other ways; that aligned with the local law and policy
				CW.4.3	Provision of training opportunities for local staff
CW.5	Supports local entrepreneurs in the development and sale of sustainable products and services	MC	v	CW.5.1	Support for local entrepreneurs in the development and sale of sustainable products and services

CW.6	Activities do not jeopardize the provision of basic services and local livelihood	MC	v	CW.6.1	Measures to limit the negative impact or obstruction of your operation to the provision of basic services [water, electricity] and local livelihood
CW.7	Actively supports initiatives for local infrastructure and social community development	OC	v	CW.7.1	Support local initiatives for social community development or any other local infrastructure projects

#### 5. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 5. Stakeholder Awareness

Criteria		Level	A	Indicator	
SA.1	Engage local stakeholders to actively participate in ecotourism development and its implementation of the activities	MC	v	SA.1.1	Engagement of local stakeholders including communities in the ecotourism development and implementation
SA.2	Provide guidance to stakeholders to encourage their roles and responsibility in sustaining benefits of ecotourism	MC	v	SA.2.1	Availability of the guidance including stakeholders' roles and responsibility
SA.3	Provide educational activities, which offer nature and culture interpretation using effective media for stakeholders	OC	v	SA.3.1	Availability of educational activities for local stakeholders on nature and culture interpretation

#### 6. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 6. Leveraging Appreciation

Criteria		Level	A	Indicator	
LA.1	Provide high-quality interpretation media on natural and cultural resources	MC	v	LA.1.1	Availability of attractive, clear, and concise sign made with sustainable material that conveys updated and accurate interpretation
				LA.1.2	Availability of regular maintenance and report of the conditions of the interpretation signs

LA.2	Provide interpretation and storytelling that lead to positive behavioral change toward ecotourism	MC	v	LA.2.1	Provision of the current and accurate contents, and easy to understand leading to visitors' responsible behavior
LA.3	Utilize digital technology for enhancing the quality of interpretation	OC	v	LA.3.1	Provision of the digital interpretation
LA.4	Ensure long-term succession of interpretation skills and technique	OC	v	LA.4.1	Provision of the opportunity for long-term succession for guides/interpreters

### 7. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 7. Quality Experience

Criteria		Level	A	Indicator	
QE.1	Develop unique and value-added ecotourism products	MC	v	QE.1.1	Availability of the ecotourism products showcasing their uniqueness and values
				QE.1.2	Availability of the document showing limits on visitor group size and visit frequency that are implemented to minimize negative impacts
QE.2	Offer hygienic and variety of local foods & beverages	MC	v	QE.2.1	Availability of the food and products offered complies with hygiene and safety standards throughout processing and serving
				QE.2.2	Availability of a variety of local food and beverage offerings reflects the authenticity and representation of the local culture
QE.3	Provides access and information for persons with special needs, where appropriate	MC	v	QE.3.1	Availability of clear and accurate information on facilities and services accessible by persons with special needs (e.g., Braille, large print, wheelchair access, website, promotional materials, sign language interpreters)
				QE.3.2	Availability of physical accessibility features/structures except in areas where topography, climate and other environmental limitations exist (e.g., Braille, wheelchair and hearing aid rentals)
QE.4	Welcome visitors without any discrimination	MC	v	QE.4.1	Availability of the Standard Operation Procedure include Non-discrimination policy against visitors

				QE.4.2	Availability of complaint records and actions are taken based on the complaints for improvement (i.e. feedback form plus action taken based on the feedback)
QE.5	Provide a clear and accurate information on the accessibility	MC	v	QE.5.1	Availability of a clear and accurate information on the levels of accessibility
				QE.5.2	Availability of information through multiple media channels and formats, presented clearly and accurately using simple language and visual aids (e.g., maps, photo)
QE.6	Respect and incorporate authentic elements of traditional and contemporary local culture	OC	v	QE.6.1	Availability of the document showing the incorporation of authentic traditional and contemporary local cultural elements into operations
QE.7	Monitor customer satisfaction levels and community acceptance; and take necessary corrective actions	OC	v	QE.7.1	Availability of the records on monitoring customer satisfaction and community acceptance, as well as any corrective actions taken
QE.8	Prepare and implement Standard Operation Procedures and guidelines for each type of activity offered to visitors	SC	v	QE.8.1	Availability of the Standard Operation Procedures and guidelines for ecotourism activities offered to visitors
QE.9	Deliver authentic cultural exchanges between communities and visitors in a sensitive and respectful manner	SC	v	QE.9.1	Availability of the documents showing that interactive programs facilitate authentic and respectful cultural exchanges among communities and visitors
QE.10	Communicate the ecotourism products	SC	v	QE.10.1	Availability of the list of marketing channels for the ecotourism products
				QE.10.2	Availability of the promotional materials (brochures, flyers, website content)

### 8. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 8. Partnership and Collaboration

Criteria	Level	A	Indicator(s)
----------	-------	---	--------------

PC.1	Establish collaboration with relevant stakeholders in various aspects of ecotourism development	MC	v	PC.1.1	Availability of collaboration with relevant stakeholders that indicate the aspect of ecotourism development (i.e. NGO, educational institutions, media, communities, etc.)
PC.2	Ensure effective partnership by sharing resources, risks, and benefits	OC	v	PC.2.1	Availability of the proof showing effective partnership by sharing resources, risks, and benefits
				PC.2.2	Availability of the evaluation report about the partnership to enhance the effectiveness

### 9. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 9. Safety and Security

Criteria		Level	A	Indicator(s)	
SS.1	Ensure comfort, safety, and security of visitors and staff	MC	v	SS.1.1	Availability of the operator policy to ensure comfort, safety, and security of visitors and staff
				SS.1.2	Availability of the safety briefings and guidelines for visitors and staff
SS.2	Identify and address the risk factors that may cause health or safety hazards	MC	v	SS.2.1	Availability of the list of identified potential health and safety hazards into multiple levels and their actions taken
SS.3	Develop crisis management plan and emergency protocol for stakeholders	MC	v	SS.3.1	Availability of the crisis management plans and emergency protocol to prepare for and handle various types of disasters (i.e., earthquakes, floods, fires, medical emergencies)
SS.4	Implement all legally required measures against infectious diseases	MC	v	SS.4.1	Availability of list of actions to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases
				SS.4.2	Availability of health and safety measures by relevant authorities and certification of compliance
SS.5	Prepare and train staff to address disaster and emergency	OC	v	SS.5.1	Availability of the document on training program and a safety manual, as well as the list of trained staff for disaster and emergency
SS.6	Ensure safety and security of the location and its immediate surroundings	OC	v	SS.6.1	Availability of the relevant signage, personal protection equipment, and clear evacuation points to ensure safety and security measure in the area

## Appendix 2: ASEAN Ecotourism Standard for Facilities

### 1. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 1. Adaptive Management

Criteria		Level	F	Indicator(s)	
AM.1	Reinvest profits from ecotourism development to maintain the quality of natural and cultural resources	MC	v	AM.1.1	Availability of document showing both natural and cultural resources or inventories
				AM.1.2	Availability of document showing which resources are reinvested (i.e. reinvestment plan)
AM.2	Implement a long term and comprehensive sustainability management system for continuous improvement	MC	v	AM.2.1	Availability of document showing sustainable management system
				AM.2.2	Availability of sustainability monitoring report to the public
				AM.2.3	The latest year and the interval (i.e., 5-10 years) of the sustainability monitoring report
AM.3	Encourage purchasing policies favor environmentally-friendly suppliers and products subject to local market conditions	MC	v	AM.3.1	Availability of policy/program to favor environmentally-friendly suppliers and products
				AM.3.2	Availability of documented evidence
AM.4	Respect and abide by local, national, and international legislation and regulations	MC	v	AM.4.1	Availability of document such as business permit, certificate, approval note by respected authority
AM.5	Respect and observe guidance/guidelines on tourism activities at local and traditional	MC	v	AM.5.1	Availability of document or media with guidance/guidelines for tourism activities

	communities, as well as spiritually, culturally and historically sensitive sites				
AM.6	Inform visitors about sustainable options for facilities, activities, and services, within the destination	MC	v	AM.6.1	Availability of information on sustainable options in the most relevant languages
AM.7	Actively engage in efficient purchasing and consumption to minimize waste	MC	v	AM.7.1	Proof of evidence of the purchase and the reduction of waste
AM.8	Actively engage in sustainable tourism planning and management in the destination	OC	v	AM.8.1	Availability of the operator policy or regulation, that indicates the engagement in sustainable tourism planning or management in the destination.
AM.9	Avoid violation over key resources, including land and water rights, upon land and property acquisition	OC	v	AM.9.1	Availability of company policy that guarantee user and access rights to resources that align with laws and regulations
AM.10	Ensure accurate and transparent marketing communication and promotion materials	OC	v	AM.10.1	Availability of marketing communication material
AM.11	Avoid any form of greenwashing	OC	v	AM.11.1	Availability of the operator policy or proof of commitment against greenwashing
				AM.11.1	Availability of the documents or media about promotional material that do not contain greenwashing
AM.12	Avoid involuntary resettlement of residents	SC	v	AM.12.1	Availability of the operator policy/program to avoid involuntary resettlement of residents
				AM.12.2	Availability of operator policy/program to compensate the residents who may be affected by resettlement

## 2. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 2. Sustainable Use

Criteria		Level	F	Indicator(s)	
SU.1	Respect and comply with conservation zones, common protected areas, and customary rights	MC	v	SU.1.1	Availability of planning documents with zoning according to designation
SU.2	Promote self-produced and local meat consumption; as well as avoiding endangered species for food	MC	v	SU.2.1	Availability of the operator policy and/or evidences promoting the use of self-produced and local meat and provisions on providing protected species for food
SU.3	Implement actions to combat the expected impacts of climate change; as well as to enhance climate resilience and adaptation	MC	v	SU.3.1	Availability of the operator policy on climate change
				SU.3.2	Availability of the list of actions in reducing and adapting climate change including energy conservation and renewable energy
SU.4	Wildlife species are not harvested, consumed, displayed, improperly handled, sold, or traded, except as part of ecotourism regulated activities	MC	v	SU.4.1	Availability of the operator policy on sustainable utilization of wildlife species
				SU.4.2	Availability of the list of activities using wildlife species
SU.5	Follows appropriate guidelines for the management and promotion of visits to natural sites in order to minimize adverse impacts	MC	v	SU.5.1	Availability of the guideline for the management and promotion on visits to natural sites
				SU.5.2	Availability of the list of where the guidelines are implemented
SU.6	Implement waste reduction, encourage waste separation, storage, and responsible disposal	MC	v	SU.6.1	Prevents the use of disposables (especially single-use plastic/bottles) and offers reusable alternatives instead
				SU.6.2	Waste, including food waste, is measured and mechanisms are in place to reduce waste
				SU.6.3	Waste is safely stored, separated, and disposed of in a responsible manner, with no adverse effect on the local population or the environment

				SU.6.4	Responsible oil storage, recycle, re-use, and disposal of engine oil. Ensures no oil is spilled into the (ground) water
SU.7	Implement waste recycling	OC	v	SU.7.1	Promote reuse or recycle waste where reduction is not feasible
				SU.7.2	Actively organizes or participates in recycling actions which go beyond basic waste separation
SU.8	Minimize greenhouse gas emission	OC	v	SU.8.1	Availability of the operator policy on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions
				SU.8.2	Availability of the list of energy efficiency practices and technologies to reduce energy
SU.9	Encourage suppliers, visitors, and other stakeholders to use more energy-saving transportation options	OC	v	SU.9.1	Availability of the operator policy on energy saving transportation options
SU.10	Use energy-savings and less-polluting vehicles whenever possible	OC	v	SU.10.1	Availability of the operator policy on less-polluting vehicles
				SU.10.2	Availability of the list of less-polluting vehicles
SU.11	Obtain a third-party carbon neutral certificate	OC	v	SU.11.1	Availability of the third-party certificate of carbon neutrality
SU.12	Takes actions to avoid the introduction of invasive species to the area of ecotourism operation	OC	v	SU.12.1	Availability of the operator policy to identify and avoid the introduction of the invasive species
				SU.12.2	Availability of the monitoring report on the invasive species
SU.13	Develop an appropriate management of biodiversity on its own property, especially if it is located in natural protected and high biodiversity value areas	SC	v	SU.13.1	Availability of the planning document containing mitigating impacts on habitat, wildlife from facilities development and tourism activities
				SU.13.2	Availability of the report on monitoring of endangered species conditions
SU.14	No species of wild animal is exploited for tourism purposes	SC	v	SU.14.1	Availability of the operator policy on avoiding exploitation of wild animals

				SU.14.2	Availability of the list of activities using wild animals and its purpose
SU.15	Ensure sustainable water sourcing and proper water treatment to minimize water risks	SC	v	SU.15.1	Availability of the operator policy on sustainable water sourcing and proper water treatment
				SU.15.2	Availability of the list of actions taken about water sourcing and water treatment
				SU.15.3	Availability of the public monitoring report on water use and treatment

### 3. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 3. Safeguarding

Criteria		Level	F	Indicator(s)	
SG.1	Leverage cultural and spiritual assets and values in interpretation plans to enhance respect and responsible use	MC	v	SG.1.1	Availability of the document on the interpretation plans, showing both cultural and spiritual assets
SG.2	Maintain the originality and minimize the degradation of local heritage in favor of business development	MC	v	SG.2.1	Availability of the operator policy or report/program on local heritage protection
				SG.2.2	Availability of the list/inventory of local heritage (both tangible and intangible); or refer to web-source
SG.3	Support and contribute to cultural preservation	MC	v	SG.3.1	Availability of the operator policy and the actions taken aimed at the preservation of culture and its support
SG.4	Ensure access for local residents in public area	MC	v	SG.4.1	Availability of the operator policy ensuring that local resident access rights are protected
SG.5	Historical and archaeological artefacts are not sold, traded or displayed, except as permitted by local and international law	OC	v	SG.5.1	Availability of the operator policy aimed at the protection of historical and archaeological artefacts
SG.6	Design and construct facilities to reflect local architecture, conserve native species, minimize impacts, and protect natural and cultural heritage	SC	v	SG.6.1	Availability of the operator policy aimed at reflecting local culture, conserving native species
				SG.6.2	Reflect traditional art and crafts in design and furnishings

**4. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 4. Community Welfare**

Criteria		Level	F	Indicator(s)	
CW.1	Prioritize local, eco-friendly and fair-trade suppliers	MC	v	CW.1.1	Availability of the list of all suppliers that include local, eco-friendly, and fair-trade suppliers, and the effort is being made to improve their proportion
				CW.1.2	Proof of purchase order from the local, eco-friendly, and fair-trade suppliers
CW.2	Has implemented an operator policy against commercial, sexual, employment of minors or any other form of harassment or deprivation of human rights according to local law and regulations	MC	v	CW.2.1	Availability of the operator policy against commercial, sexual, employment of minors or any other form of harassment or deprivation of human rights
				CW.2.2	Implementation of this policy (if any) by you and your staffs
CW.3	Respect labor right and provide safe and secure working environment with minimum wage according to the authorities	MC	v	CW.3.1	Provision of acceptable wage based on the minimum wage set by the authority
				CW.3.2	Follow all building regulations, safety regulations, and safeguards to ensure safe and secure working environment for staff and local residents
				CW.3.3	Provision of health benefits or any means as mitigation for any incidents
CW.4	Provide equal opportunity and advancement for local residents without any discriminations and aligned with the local law and policy, and offer regular training	MC	v	CW.4.1	Provision of employment opportunities for local residents
				CW.4.2	Recruitment process which ensures no discrimination by their gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or any other ways; that aligned with the local law and policy
				CW.4.3	Provision of training opportunities for local staff

CW.5	Supports local entrepreneurs in the development and sale of sustainable products and services	MC	v	CW.5.1	Support for local entrepreneurs in the development and sale of sustainable products and services
CW.6	Activities do not jeopardize the provision of basic services and local livelihood	MC	v	CW.6.1	Measures to limit the negative impact or obstruction of your operation to the provision of basic services [water, electricity] and local livelihood
CW.7	Actively supports initiatives for local infrastructure and social community development	OC	v	CW.7.1	Support local initiatives for social community development or any other local infrastructure projects

#### 5. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 5. Stakeholder Awareness

Criteria		Level	F	Indicator	
SA.1	Engage local stakeholders to actively participate in ecotourism development and its implementation of the activities	MC	v	SA.1.1	Engagement of local stakeholders including communities in the ecotourism development and implementation
SA.2	Provide guidance to stakeholders to encourage their roles and responsibility in sustaining benefits of ecotourism	MC	v	SA.2.1	Availability of the guidance including stakeholders' roles and responsibility
SA.3	Provide educational activities, which offer nature and culture interpretation using effective media for stakeholders	OC	v	SA.3.1	Availability of educational activities for local stakeholders on nature and culture interpretation

#### 6. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 6. Leveraging Appreciation

Criteria		Level	F	Indicator	
LA.1	Provide high-quality interpretation media on natural and cultural resources	MC	v	LA.1.1	Availability of attractive, clear, and concise sign made with sustainable material that conveys updated and accurate interpretation

				LA.1.2	Availability of regular maintenance and report of the conditions of the interpretation signs
LA.2	Provide interpretation and storytelling that lead to positive behavioral change toward ecotourism	MC	v	LA.2.1	Provision of the current and accurate contents, and easy to understand leading to visitors' responsible behavior
LA.3	Utilize digital technology for enhancing the quality of interpretation	OC	v	LA.3.1	Provision of the digital interpretation
LA.4	Ensure long-term succession of interpretation skills and technique	OC	v	LA.4.1	Provision of the opportunity for long-term succession for guides/interpreters

### 7. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 7. Quality Experience

Criteria		Level	F	Indicator	
QE.1	Develop unique and value-added ecotourism products	MC	v	QE.1.1	Availability of the ecotourism products showcasing their uniqueness and values
				QE.1.2	Availability of the document showing limits on visitor group size and visit frequency that are implemented to minimize negative impacts
QE.2	Offer hygienic and variety of local foods & beverages	MC	v	QE.2.1	Availability of the food and products offered complies with hygiene and safety standards throughout processing and serving
				QE.2.2	Availability of a variety of local food and beverage offerings reflects the authenticity and representation of the local culture
QE.3	Provides access and information for persons with special needs, where appropriate	MC	v	QE.3.1	Availability of clear and accurate information on facilities and services accessible by persons with special needs (e.g., Braille, large print, wheelchair access, website, promotional materials, sign language interpreters)
				QE.3.2	Availability of physical accessibility features/structures except in areas where topography, climate and other environmental

					limitations exist (e.g., Braille, wheelchair and hearing aid rentals)
QE.4	Welcome visitors without any discrimination	MC	v	QE.4.1	Availability of the Standard Operation Procedure include Non-discrimination policy against visitors
				QE.4.2	Availability of complaint records and actions are taken based on the complaints for improvement (i.e. feedback form plus action taken based on the feedback)
QE.5	Provide a clear and accurate information on the accessibility	MC	v	QE.5.1	Availability of a clear and accurate information on the levels of accessibility
				QE.5.2	Availability of information through multiple media channels and formats, presented clearly and accurately using simple language and visual aids (e.g., maps, photo)
QE.6	Respect and incorporate authentic elements of traditional and contemporary local culture	OC	v	QE.6.1	Availability of the document showing the incorporation of authentic traditional and contemporary local cultural elements into operations
QE.7	Monitor customer satisfaction levels and community acceptance; and take necessary corrective actions	OC	v	QE.7.1	Availability of the records on monitoring customer satisfaction and community acceptance, as well as any corrective actions taken
QE.10	Communicate the ecotourism products	SC	v	QE.10.1	Availability of the list of marketing channels for the ecotourism products
				QE.10.2	Availability of the promotional materials (brochures, flyers, website content)

### 8. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 8. Partnership and Collaboration

Criteria		Level	F	Indicator(s)	
PC.1	Establish collaboration with relevant stakeholders in various aspects of ecotourism development	MC	v	PC.1.1	Availability of collaboration with relevant stakeholders that indicate the aspect of ecotourism development (i.e. NGO, educational institutions, media, communities, etc.)

PC.2	Ensure effective partnership by sharing resources, risks, and benefits	OC	v	PC.2.1	Availability of the proof showing effective partnership by sharing resources, risks, and benefits
				PC.2.2	Availability of the evaluation report about the partnership to enhance the effectiveness

### 9. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 9. Safety and Security

Criteria		Level	F	Indicator(s)	
SS.1	Ensure comfort, safety, and security of visitors and staff	MC	v	SS.1.1	Availability of the operator policy to ensure comfort, safety, and security of visitors and staff
				SS.1.2	Availability of the safety briefings and guidelines for visitors and staff
SS.2	Identify and address the risk factors that may cause health or safety hazards	MC	v	SS.2.1	Availability of the list of identified potential health and safety hazards into multiple levels and their actions taken
SS.3	Develop crisis management plan and emergency protocol for stakeholders	MC	v	SS.3.1	Availability of the crisis management plans and emergency protocol to prepare for and handle various types of disasters (i.e., earthquakes, floods, fires, medical emergencies)
SS.4	Implement all legally required measures against infectious diseases	MC	v	SS.4.1	Availability of list of actions to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases
				SS.4.2	Availability of health and safety measures by relevant authorities and certification of compliance
SS.5	Prepare and train staff to address disaster and emergency	OC	v	SS.5.1	Availability of the document on training program and a safety manual, as well as the list of trained staff for disaster and emergency
SS.6	Ensure safety and security of the location and its immediate surroundings	OC	v	SS.6.1	Availability of the relevant signage, personal protection equipment, and clear evacuation points to ensure safety and security measure in the area



**Appendix 3: ASEAN Ecotourism Standard for Services**

**1. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 1. Adaptive Management**

Criteria		Level	S	Indicator(s)	
AM.1	Reinvest profits from ecotourism development to maintain the quality of natural and cultural resources	MC	v	AM.1.1	Availability of document showing both natural and cultural resources or inventories
				AM.1.2	Availability of document showing which resources are reinvested (i.e. reinvestment plan)
AM.2	Implement a long term and comprehensive sustainability management system for continuous improvement	MC	v	AM.2.1	Availability of document showing sustainable management system
				AM.2.2	Availability of sustainability monitoring report to the public
				AM.2.3	The latest year and the interval (i.e., 5-10 years) of the sustainability monitoring report
AM.3	Encourage purchasing policies favor environmentally-friendly suppliers and products subject to local market conditions	MC	v	AM.3.1	Availability of policy/program to favor environmentally-friendly suppliers and products
				AM.3.2	Availability of documented evidence
AM.4	Respect and abide by local, national, and international legislation and regulations	MC	v	AM.4.1	Availability of document such as business permit, certificate, approval note by respected authority
AM.5	Respect and observe guidance/guidelines on tourism activities at local and traditional communities, as well as spiritually, culturally and historically sensitive sites	MC	v	AM.5.1	Availability of document or media with guidance/guidelines for tourism activities

AM.6	Inform visitors about sustainable options for facilities, activities, and services, within the destination	MC	v	AM.6.1	Availability of information on sustainable options in the most relevant languages
AM.7	Actively engage in efficient purchasing and consumption to minimize waste	MC	v	AM.7.1	Proof of evidence of the purchase and the reduction of waste
AM.8	Actively engage in sustainable tourism planning and management in the destination	OC	v	AM.8.1	Availability of the operator policy or regulation, that indicates the engagement in sustainable tourism planning or management in the destination.
AM.9	Avoid violation over key resources, including land and water rights, upon land and property acquisition	OC	v	AM.9.1	Availability of company policy that guarantee user and access rights to resources that align with laws and regulations
AM.10	Ensure accurate and transparent marketing communication and promotion materials	OC	v	AM.10.1	Availability of marketing communication material
AM.11	Avoid any form of greenwashing	OC	v	AM.11.1	Availability of the operator policy or proof of commitment against greenwashing
				AM.11.1	Availability of the documents or media about promotional material that do not contain greenwashing

## 2. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 2. Sustainable Use

Criteria		Level	S	Indicator(s)	
SU.1	Respect and comply with conservation zones, common protected areas, and customary rights	MC	v	SU.1.1	Availability of planning documents with zoning according to designation
SU.2	Promote self-produced and local meat consumption; as well as avoiding endangered species for food	MC	v	SU.2.1	Availability of the operator policy and/or evidences promoting the use of self-produced and local meat and provisions on providing protected species for food
SU.3		MC	v	SU.3.1	Availability of the operator policy on climate change

	Implement actions to combat the expected impacts of climate change; as well as to enhance climate resilience and adaptation			SU.3.2	Availability of the list of actions in reducing and adapting climate change including energy conservation and renewable energy
SU.4	Wildlife species are not harvested, consumed, displayed, improperly handled, sold, or traded, except as part of ecotourism regulated activities	MC	v	SU.4.1	Availability of the operator policy on sustainable utilization of wildlife species
				SU.4.2	Availability of the list of activities using wildlife species
SU.5	Follows appropriate guidelines for the management and promotion of visits to natural sites in order to minimize adverse impacts	MC	v	SU.5.1	Availability of the guideline for the management and promotion on visits to natural sites
				SU.5.2	Availability of the list of where the guidelines are implemented
SU.6	Implement waste reduction, encourage waste separation, storage, and responsible disposal	MC	v	SU.6.1	Prevents the use of disposables (especially single-use plastic/bottles) and offers reusable alternatives instead
				SU.6.2	Waste, including food waste, is measured and mechanisms are in place to reduce waste
				SU.6.3	Waste is safely stored, separated, and disposed of in a responsible manner, with no adverse effect on the local population or the environment
				SU.6.4	Responsible oil storage, recycle, re-use, and disposal of engine oil. Ensures no oil is spilled into the (ground) water
SU.7	Implement waste recycling	OC	v	SU.7.1	Promote reuse or recycle waste where reduction is not feasible
				SU.7.2	Actively organizes or participates in recycling actions which go beyond basic waste separation
SU.8	Minimize greenhouse gas emission	OC	v	SU.8.1	Availability of the operator policy on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions
				SU.8.2	Availability of the list of energy efficiency practices and technologies to reduce energy

SU. 9	Encourage suppliers, visitors, and other stakeholders to use more energy-saving transportation options	OC	v	SU. 9.1	Availability of the operator policy on energy saving transportation options
SU.10	Use energy-savings and less-polluting vehicles whenever possible	OC	v	SU.10.1	Availability of the operator policy on less-polluting vehicles
				SU.10.2	Availability of the list of less-polluting vehicles
SU.11	Obtain a third-party carbon neutral certificate	OC	v	SU.11.1	Availability of the third-party certificate of carbon neutrality
SU.12	Takes actions to avoid the introduction of invasive species to the area of ecotourism operation	OC	v	SU.12.1	Availability of the operator policy to identify and avoid the introduction of the invasive species
				SU.12.2	Availability of the monitoring report on the invasive species
SU.14	No species of wild animal is exploited for tourism purposes	SC	v	SU.14.1	Availability of the operator policy on avoiding exploitation of wild animals
				SU.14.2	Availability of the list of activities using wild animals and its purpose
SU.15	Ensure sustainable water sourcing and proper water treatment to minimize water risks	SC	v	SU.15.1	Availability of the operator policy on sustainable water sourcing and proper water treatment
				SU.15.2	Availability of the list of actions taken about water sourcing and water treatment
				SU.15.3	Availability of the public monitoring report on water use and treatment

### 3. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 3. Safeguarding

Criteria		Level	S	Indicator(s)	
SG.1	Leverage cultural and spiritual assets and values in interpretation plans to enhance respect and responsible use	MC	v	SG.1.1	Availability of the document on the interpretation plans, showing both cultural and spiritual assets

SG.2	Maintain the originality and minimize the degradation of local heritage in favor of business development	MC	v	SG.2.1	Availability of the operator policy or report/program on local heritage protection
				SG.2.2	Availability of the list/inventory of local heritage (both tangible and intangible); or refer to web-source
SG.3	Support and contribute to cultural preservation	MC	v	SG.3.1	Availability of the operator policy and the actions taken aimed at the preservation of culture and its support
SG.4	Ensure access for local residents in public area	MC	v	SG.4.1	Availability of the operator policy ensuring that local resident access rights are protected
SG.5	Historical and archaeological artefacts are not sold, traded or displayed, except as permitted by local and international law	OC	v	SG.5.1	Availability of the operator policy aimed at the protection of historical and archaeological artefacts

#### 4. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 4. Community Welfare

Criteria		Level	S	Indicator(s)	
CW.1	Prioritize local, eco-friendly and fair-trade suppliers	MC	v	CW.1.1	Availability of the list of all suppliers that include local, eco-friendly, and fair-trade suppliers, and the effort is being made to improve their proportion
				CW.1.2	Proof of purchase order from the local, eco-friendly, and fair-trade suppliers
CW.2	Has implemented an operator policy against commercial, sexual, employment of minors or any other form of harassment or deprivation of human rights according to local law and regulations	MC	v	CW.2.1	Availability of the operator policy against commercial, sexual, employment of minors or any other form of harassment or deprivation of human rights
				CW.2.2	Implementation of this policy (if any) by you and your staffs
CW.3	Respect labor right and provide safe and secure working environment with	MC	v	CW.3.1	Provision of acceptable wage based on the minimum wage set by the authority

	minimum wage according to the authorities			CW.3.2	Follow all building regulations, safety regulations, and safeguards to ensure safe and secure working environment for staff and local residents
				CW.3.3	Provision of health benefits or any means as mitigation for any incidents
CW.4	Provide equal opportunity and advancement for local residents without any discriminations and aligned with the local law and policy, and offer regular training	MC	v	CW.4.1	Provision of employment opportunities for local residents
				CW.4.2	Recruitment process which ensures no discrimination by their gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or any other ways; that aligned with the local law and policy
				CW.4.3	Provision of training opportunities for local staff
CW.5	Supports local entrepreneurs in the development and sale of sustainable products and services	MC	v	CW.5.1	Support for local entrepreneurs in the development and sale of sustainable products and services
CW.6	Activities do not jeopardize the provision of basic services and local livelihood	MC	v	CW.6.1	Measures to limit the negative impact or obstruction of your operation to the provision of basic services [water, electricity] and local livelihood
CW.7	Actively supports initiatives for local infrastructure and social community development	OC	v	CW.7.1	Support local initiatives for social community development or any other local infrastructure projects

##### 5. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 5. Stakeholder Awareness

Criteria		Level	S	Indicator	
SA.1	Engage local stakeholders to actively participate in ecotourism development and its implementation of the activities	MC	v	SA.1.1	Engagement of local stakeholders including communities in the ecotourism development and implementation
SA.2	Provide guidance to stakeholders to encourage their roles and responsibility in sustaining benefits of ecotourism	MC	v	SA.2.1	Availability of the guidance including stakeholders' roles and responsibility

SA.3	Provide educational activities, which offer nature and culture interpretation using effective media for stakeholders	OC	v	SA.3.1	Availability of educational activities for local stakeholders on nature and culture interpretation
------	--	----	---	--------	--

#### 6. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 6. Leveraging Appreciation

Criteria		Level	S	Indicator	
LA.1	Provide high-quality interpretation media on natural and cultural resources	MC	v	LA.1.1	Availability of attractive, clear, and concise sign made with sustainable material that conveys updated and accurate interpretation
				LA.1.2	Availability of regular maintenance and report of the conditions of the interpretation signs
LA.2	Provide interpretation and storytelling that lead to positive behavioral change toward ecotourism	MC	v	LA.2.1	Provision of the current and accurate contents, and easy to understand leading to visitors' responsible behavior
LA.3	Utilize digital technology for enhancing the quality of interpretation	OC	v	LA.3.1	Provision of the digital interpretation
LA.4	Ensure long-term succession of interpretation skills and technique	OC	v	LA.4.1	Provision of the opportunity for long-term succession for guides/interpreters

#### 7. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 7. Quality Experience

Criteria		Level	S	Indicator	
QE.1	Develop unique and value-added ecotourism products	MC	v	QE.1.1	Availability of the ecotourism products showcasing their uniqueness and values
				QE.1.2	Availability of the document showing limits on visitor group size and visit frequency that are implemented to minimize negative impacts

QE.2	Offer hygienic and variety of local foods & beverages	MC	v	QE.2.1	Availability of the food and products offered complies with hygiene and safety standards throughout processing and serving
				QE.2.2	Availability of a variety of local food and beverage offerings reflects the authenticity and representation of the local culture
QE.3	Provides access and information for persons with special needs, where appropriate	MC	v	QE.3.1	Availability of clear and accurate information on facilities and services accessible by persons with special needs (e.g., Braille, large print, wheelchair access, website, promotional materials, sign language interpreters)
				QE.3.2	Availability of physical accessibility features/structures except in areas where topography, climate and other environmental limitations exist (e.g., Braille, wheelchair and hearing aid rentals)
QE.4	Welcome visitors without any discrimination	MC	v	QE.4.1	Availability of the Standard Operation Procedure include Non-discrimination policy against visitors
				QE.4.2	Availability of complaint records and actions are taken based on the complaints for improvement (i.e. feedback form plus action taken based on the feedback)
QE.5	Provide a clear and accurate information on the accessibility	MC	v	QE.5.1	Availability of a clear and accurate information on the levels of accessibility
				QE.5.2	Availability of information through multiple media channels and formats, presented clearly and accurately using simple language and visual aids (e.g., maps, photo)
QE.6	Respect and incorporate authentic elements of traditional and contemporary local culture	OC	v	QE.6.1	Availability of the document showing the incorporation of authentic traditional and contemporary local cultural elements into operations

QE.7	Monitor customer satisfaction levels and community acceptance; and take necessary corrective actions	OC	v	QE.7.1	Availability of the records on monitoring customer satisfaction and community acceptance, as well as any corrective actions taken
QE.8	Prepare and implement Standard Operation Procedures and guidelines for each type of activity offered to visitors	SC	v	QE.8.1	Availability of the Standard Operation Procedures and guidelines for ecotourism activities offered to visitors
QE.9	Deliver authentic cultural exchanges between communities and visitors in a sensitive and respectful manner	SC	v	QE.9.1	Availability of the documents showing that interactive programs facilitate authentic and respectful cultural exchanges among communities and visitors

### 8. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 8. Partnership and Collaboration

Criteria		Level	S	Indicator(s)	
PC.1	Establish collaboration with relevant stakeholders in various aspects of ecotourism development	MC	v	PC.1.1	Availability of collaboration with relevant stakeholders that indicate the aspect of ecotourism development (i.e. NGO, educational institutions, media, communities, etc.)
PC.2	Ensure effective partnership by sharing resources, risks, and benefits	OC	v	PC.2.1	Availability of the proof showing effective partnership by sharing resources, risks, and benefits
				PC.2.2	Availability of the evaluation report about the partnership to enhance the effectiveness

### 9. Table of Criteria and Indicator for Criteria 9. Safety and Security

Criteria		Level	S	Indicator(s)	
SS.1	Ensure comfort, safety, and security of visitors and staff	MC	v	SS.1.1	Availability of the operator policy to ensure comfort, safety, and security of visitors and staff
				SS.1.2	Availability of the safety briefings and guidelines for visitors and staff
SS.2	Identify and address the risk factors that may cause health or safety hazards	MC	v	SS.2.1	Availability of the list of identified potential health and safety hazards into multiple levels and their actions taken

SS.3	Develop crisis management plan and emergency protocol for stakeholders	MC	v	SS.3.1	Availability of the crisis management plans and emergency protocol to prepare for and handle various types of disasters (i.e., earthquakes, floods, fires, medical emergencies)
SS.4	Implement all legally required measures against infectious diseases	MC	v	SS.4.1	Availability of list of actions to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases
				SS.4.2	Availability of health and safety measures by relevant authorities and certification of compliance
SS.5	Prepare and train staff to address disaster and emergency	OC	v	SS.5.1	Availability of the document on training program and a safety manual, as well as the list of trained staff for disaster and emergency
SS.6	Ensure safety and security of the location and its immediate surroundings	OC	v	SS.6.1	Availability of the relevant signage, personal protection equipment, and clear evacuation points to ensure safety and security measure in the area