BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

To provide guidance to the Association and its Members, the following are recommended best practices regarding areas of particular interest to the industry.

1. SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES

A. In general terms, Members are encouraged to:

- Co-operate with local organizations and local government environmental initiatives.
- Encourage the purchase of products and services from local businesses and artisans.
- Participate in local activities to continuously clean the local environment.
- Inform guests about any sensitive local environmental issues.
- Inform guests of local foods and specialties and introduce examples on their menus.
- Provide activities and relaxation opportunities that enhance the environmental profile of the Project.

B. Members are also encouraged to develop environmentally friendly policies and procedures for their Projects which, inter alia,

- Continually identify opportunities to reduce, reuse and recycle waste,
- Where possible, promote the separation of waste in relevant fractions with space provided at collection points for recycling.
- Compost organic and garden waste locally, and the use of the same as soil and fertilizer in the Project's landscape.
- Reduce the use of disposable wares, with the use of refillable dispensers where possible.
- Embrace the use of recycled products, such as recycled paper.

C. Members should have a formalized commitment to protecting the environment expressed in a policy which is:

- Openly available
- Appropriate to the nature, scale and impact of the Project's activities, products and services
- Expresses a commitment to continual improvements
- Provides a framework for setting and reviewing environmental objectives and targets
- Clearly focused on protecting the environment and biodiversity
- Documented, implemented and maintained and communicated to all the Project's personnel.

SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS

1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL ARCHITECTURE & LANDSCAPING

- Architectural features should use sustainably sourced materials where possible.
- Landscaping should be established and well maintained.

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY & EMS

- A drafted Environmental Management System (EMS) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) should be in place.
- Staff and guests must be engaged in implementation.

1.3 WASTE & WATER

- Solid waste should be separated at source, with efficient, elaborate collection systems.
- Wastewater treatment system in place onsite or formal offsite system; regular septic management required.
- No open burning of waste, enclosed and animal proof storage.
- Install grease traps for kitchens in place, monitored and regularly cleaned.
- Spill control in place for fuel, oil, paints and chemicals.

1.4 WATER CONSERVATION

- Absolute must to estimate water use for all sections and identify water-saving measures.
- Reduce the need for fresh water by installing low water use appliances and back of house with water efficient dishwashers and washing machines, push button taps, faucets with max. flow rates and any other suitable technologies designed to minimize water usage.
- Promote the use of treated grey water for irrigation purposes, such as a drip irrigation system.
- Evaluate the possibility of a constructed wetland for water treatment at the Project, which can provide local treatment, and the possibility for recycling of water.

1.5 ENERGY CONSERVATION

- Energy-saving installations fittings required.
- Evidence of energy-saving practices in operation.
- Endeavour to use renewable locally available energy sources, for example, solar energy for hot water systems.
- Reduce the need for energy and gas with, for example, energy efficient lighting, integrated control systems, fittings that automatically switch off lights and AC.
- Purchase energy from renewable public energy sources (wind, solar or other).

1.6 SUPPLY CHAIN & CSR

- Qualified supplier list; evidence of procurement process and traceability.
- CSR program with clear inventory of activities, supporting staff, community, and environment.
- Members should ideally have an established target for local hiring and procurement.

2. DETAILED SITE CONSIDERATIONS and GUIDELINES

Sites for Projects should ideally be carefully chosen to focus on the unique or immersive experiences the site's location can provide for guests. Protection of biodiversity should be a prime consideration as well as the precise layout and siting of guest accommodations within a Project to ensure an adequate level of guest privacy.

2.1 PHYSICAL QUALITY & DESIGN

- Site should be appropriate for an outdoor lodging facility, easily accessible but not prone to excessive noise or light pollution.
- The site should have a clear, distinct entrance and exit, staffed where appropriate.
- The site should be free from flood risk, strong winds, and aligned with local regulations.
- The location should ideally offer added scenic value (fauna, flora, landscape).
- For tented accommodation- tree, branch and deadwood assessments should be performed and documented at least once a year.
- Drainage capacity should be considered in the design and be sufficient for 'worst case' rainfall scenarios.

2.2 ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

- Structures should be sound, safe, and modestly attractive.
- Ramps and at least one disabled accessible tent should be provided.
- An accessible public bathroom should be available and properly signed.
- The design must allow for efficient flow of staff and guest movement.

2.3 LIGHTING, VENTILATION, NOISE & TEMPERATURE CONTROL

- Adequate natural/artificial landscape lighting, ideally down-lit to avoid light pollution.
- Sufficient ventilation inside lodging; mechanical ventilation/cooling/heating may be used.
- Written policy regarding guest behaviors, noise making and playing of music so as not to impact other guests. 'Quiet hours' mandated.
- Where applicable, any generators placed away from tents and sound suppression measures should be in place.
- Team member housing noise policy in place.

2.4 PUBLIC AREAS

- Lobby & lounge must be distinct, with quality furniture and adequate seating.
- Circulation areas (paths, corridors) must be non-slip, well lit, with railings over large drops.
- Ideally, at least one dining area, with seating ≥ 40% of bed capacity offering at least freshly prepared, simple local food and drinks.
- Adequate parking, including spaces for guests with disabilities.

2.5 LODGING & FACILITIES – SUGGESTED DIMENSIONS

- Guest lodges/tents ≥ 15 m^2 bedroom space.
- En-suite bathrooms ≥ 5 m^2, private (where applicable).
- Kitchen space: 0.5 m^2 per guest bed minimum.
- At least 75 m^2 function room (if offered).

3. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT and SERVICE STANDARDS

These guidelines for professional management of Outdoor Lodging projects reflect the Association's commitment to the highest level of professional conduct and ethical standards among Members engaged in the business of managing Outdoor Lodging projects.

Management should ensure all staff have proper job descriptions and are properly and adequately trained in high quality service standards. Management should have sufficiently qualified staff to ensure the capable handling of guests' interests. The minimum expectation from Management should include the following professional services:

- Safety and security of all guests
- Project maintenance (including accommodation interiors and exteriors) and all common areas and onsite facilities
- Reservations for guests
- Check-in and check-out services
- Hospitality and other guest services
- Housekeeping

3.1 RECEPTION, CONCIERGE & GUEST HANDLING

- Reception should ideally be staffed at least 15 hours/day (6am–9.00. p.m.).
- Semi-automated reservation & billing systems are a must-have.
- Emergency information in tents.
- Assistance with luggage required.

3.2 COMMUNICATION

- Telephone or walking talkie in each tent, if possible/needed.
- Internet access is available in at least one public area.

3.3 GUEST ROOMS

- Spacious accommodations relative to traditional camping
- Beds should be raised above the floor, unless situated on a raised platform used to align with prevailing local or market custom.
- Minimum bed sizes as per international standards (e.g. internationally recognized king/queen/twin sizes) with comfortable mattress & bedding.
- Full-length mirror
- Coordinated décor with decorative enhancements.
- Good-quality window coverings.
- Dressing-table lighting plus bedside lights.
- Quality, durable furniture & fittings; desk with proper lighting and power outlet.
- Provision of wardrobe space + luggage stand.
- Comprehensive guest directory + emergency procedures.

3.4 EN-SUITE BATHROOM (WHERE APPLICABLE)

- Very good lighting & ventilation.
- 24-hour hot water with mixer valve.
- At least soap & shampoo provided in refillable (not single-use) containers.

4. FOOD & BEVERAGE and PUBLIC HEALTH

Members should develop and adopt strict hygiene protocols including regular sanitation of accommodations, common facilities and high-touch surfaces, as well as promoting proper hygiene practices among guests and staff.

4.1 FOOD HYGIENE

- Written food hygiene policy; HACCP or FSMS audits and certification.
- Meals can be set or ordered in advance.
- Water provided in refillable bottles (not single-use) - drinking and cooking water purified and tested monthly.
- Ice to be made from potable water only.

4.2 BREAKFAST

- Served, self-service and/or grab & go, as determined appropriate
- Served/made available for up to 3 hours.
- Range of hot and cold items, where possible/appropriate.

4.3 OTHER MEALS

- Served, self-service or grab & go as determined appropriate
- Three-courses with both hot and cold options, where possible/appropriate.
- High standard of offerings and presentation.

4.4 BEVERAGES - Wide range of drinks to be offered; alcohol served legally and responsibly.

5. GUEST SAFETY and SECURITY

Members shall ensure guest health and safety is paramount whilst guests are onsite by adopting best practices based on comprehensive staff training including emergency procedures, having at least one staff member trained in first-aid procedures. Installation and regular maintenance of suitable safety equipment should be incorporated, and, where appropriate, installation of security measures like CCTV cameras, provision of clear signage for emergency gathering locations and compliance with any applicable health and safety regulations. Ensuring guest safety involves comprehensive emergency preparedness, maintaining updated emergency contact information for guests, conducting routine safety drills, all designed to mitigate risks and swiftly respond to any unforeseen emergencies.

5.1 SECURITY MEASURES

- Adequate trained personnel + documented Emergency Response Procedures.
- Guest and staff movement control; vehicle scanning where applicable.
- CCTV at entry points, reception, public areas, and corridors.
- Electrical safety with high-quality materials.
- Clear perimeter to camp set and patrolled.
- Extreme weather monitored and warnings issued to guests if expected.
- Emergency Assembly Points clearly marked and away from tents, fuel storage, flood risk and overhang. Allowing access for emergency vehicles.

5.2 FIRE SAFETY

- Fire & smoke detectors should be installed.
- In-house firefighting team; at least one annual drill documented.
- Fire rated construction materials to be used wherever possible.
- Where applicable, fire breaks and vegetation clearance zones maintained.

5.3 EMERGENCY POWER

- Backup generator ensuring ≥ 18 hours power and continuous supply to sensitive areas.

5.4 MEDICAL PROVISION

- Team should undergo at least annual CPR training.
- Defibrillator and back board kept on site and training in proper use required.
- Emergency evacuation, medivac and local medical facility procedures known and trained. Contact numbers for each listed in prominent positions.

6. INSURANCE

A Member which is managing and operating a Project should ensure it holds an adequate level of public liability and employer's liability insurance cover in respect of all usual commercial risks

7. STAFF STANDARDS

7.1 QUALIFICATIONS

- Managers must be suitably trained;
- Department heads should have recognized training.
- At least **70% of staff** should ideally have certified qualifications.

7.2 TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

- Maintain comprehensive internal + external training programs.

7.3 GROOMING & WELFARE

- Good-quality uniforms; name tags.
- Clean changing rooms with showers & lockers.
- Comfortable accommodation provided when team stay onsite.
- Private rooms for management.
- Staff recreational facilities and annual team events.
- Staff welfare fund transparently managed with books accessible to all.

8. PURCHASING AND PROCUREMENT

Developers and Operators shall wherever possible develop procurement standards including:

- An environmental purchasing policy for the Project which establishes ecological criteria for purchasing.
- Developing a system for selecting suppliers and products to be used, based on ecological criteria.
- Preferring and sourcing wherever possible, goods which are environmentally friendly in content, packaging, ease of recycling and disposal.
- Show a strong preference for goods which are locally produced and goods that have a recognized environmental label.
- Prefer to purchase food from local producers and organically grown products whenever possible.

9. GUEST EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT

- Informative website; interactive features recommended.
- Online feedback mechanisms.
- In culturally sensitive areas, guests must be given a briefing on culturally acceptable behavior, dress codes etc.
- Dedicated desk for complaints; defined escalation path.
- Presence on at least one major online travel agent or group/chain booking platform.

10. WILDLIFE POLICY (where relevant)

- Wildlife non-interaction, harassment or feeding guidelines in place.
- Secure food storage, waste storage, disposal areas to avoid attracting or changing wildlife behavior.
- No harmful response plan for potentially dangerous or aggressive wildlife.
- Team members specifically trained in correct medical response to snake bite/insect sting and extreme allergic reaction.
- Guests to be briefed on possible wildlife encounters and correct response.

11. TRANSPORT & GUIDE SAFETY

- All vehicles must be licensed, maintained and hold all legally required safety documentation and maintenance destination.
- Life jackets must be available for all team members and guests when traveling by boat.
- Any team member operating any vehicle must have requisite training and licensing to operate that vehicle.

12. CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYEES.

Management should provide continuing professional education and training for its staff in all aspects of hospitality management and sustainability practices through attendance on professional courses and self-study courses and other similar professional association conferences and seminars related to the practice of hospitality management.

13. MARKETING AND POSITIONING

Members should strive to achieve certification from GSTC recognized or accredited schemes and positively market the environmental aspects of their Projects.