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Edition 1

# **SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL STANDARD**

## **Responsible tourism — Requirements**

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### Table of changes

Change No.	Date	Scope

## Foreword

This South African standard was approved by National Committee SABS TC 228, *Tourism and related services*, in accordance with procedures of the SABS Standards Division, in compliance with annex 3 of the WTO/TBT agreement.

This document was published in XXXX 2011.

Reference is made in 1.3 to the "national accreditation authority" and the "relevant national legislation". In South Africa this means the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS), and the Accreditation for Conformity Assessment, Calibration and Good Laboratory Practice Act, 2006 (Act No. 19 of 2006), respectively.

Reference is made in 3.1.9 to the "relevant national legislation". In South Africa this means the Employment Equity Regulations in terms of the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No. 55 of 1998).

Reference is made in 3.1.15 to the "relevant national legislation". In South Africa this means the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No. 55 of 1998).

Reference is made in 3.1.21 to the "relevant national legislation". In South Africa this means Section 1 and the Schedule of the National Small Enterprise Act, 1996 (Act No. 102 of 1996).

Reference is made in 3.1.26 to the "relevant national legislation". In South Africa this means Section 7 of the Tourism Sector Codes in terms of the Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act, 2003 (Act No. 53 of 2003).

## Introduction

The 1996 *White Paper on Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa* identifies responsible tourism as the key guiding principle for tourism development. Responsible tourism implies the following:

- a) a proactive approach by tourism industry partners to develop, market and manage the tourism industry in a responsible manner, so as to create a competitive advantage;
- b) the responsibility of the tourism industry to the environment through the promotion of balanced and sustainable tourism as it focuses on the development of environmentally-based tourism activities (such as game viewing and diving);
- c) the responsibility of government and business to involve the local communities that are near the tourism plant and attractions through the development of meaningful economic linkages (for example the supply of agricultural produce to the lodges, and outsourcing of laundry);
- d) the responsibility to respect, invest in and develop local cultures and protect them from over-commercialization and overexploitation;
- e) the responsibility of local communities to become actively involved in the tourism industry, to practice sustainable development and to ensure the safety and security of the visitors;
- f) the responsibility to visitors through ensuring their safety, security and health;

- g) the responsibility of both employers and employees in the tourism industry to each other as well as to the customer. Responsible trade union practices and responsible employment practices will be the hallmarks of the new tourism in South Africa;
- h) the responsibility of government as well as the tourists themselves to observe the norms and practices of South Africa, particularly with respect to the environment and culture of the country.

It is clear from the above that South Africa has selected responsible tourism as a pathway to achieve the goals of sustainable development, i.e. environmental integrity, social justice and economic prosperity.

Subsequently, the former Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) developed *National Guidelines for Responsible Tourism* and a *Responsible Tourism Manual* in 2002. The draft *National Tourism Sector Strategy (2010)* has as its vision “boldly growing responsible tourism together to deliver memorable experiences for all our tourists and sustainable benefits for all South Africans”. However, South Africa currently does not have a single, unified national minimum standard for responsible tourism or an accreditation process for conformity assessment bodies offering conformity assessment schemes related to the sustainability of tourism organizations.

Many existing interpretations of responsible tourism do not embrace the three main elements of responsible and sustainable tourism, i.e. social, environmental and economic responsibility. Furthermore, several different sets of criteria are currently used to certify tourism businesses. In this context, tourism businesses and consumers find it difficult to evaluate the credibility of certification schemes, and to determine whether the certification criteria used are in line with national policy. Inconsistent interpretations of responsible tourism also confuse consumers, potentially damaging the reputation of the destination.

This standard has therefore been developed to

- a) establish a common understanding of the minimum criteria for responsible tourism,
- b) promote responsible tourism in the tourism sector, including accommodation, hospitality, travel distribution systems, as well as all organs of state and entities, organized labour and communities involved or interested in the tourism sector in South Africa,
- c) establish the minimum criteria for certification of the sustainability of organizations in the tourism sector, and
- d) be in line with the *National Guidelines for Responsible Tourism* and the global sustainable tourism criteria.

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## **Responsible tourism — Requirements**

### **1 Scope**

**1.1** This standard establishes specific minimum requirements for the performance of organizations in the tourism sector in relation to sustainability, and enables an organization to formulate a policy and objectives, which take into account legal requirements and information pertaining to the impact of these requirements.

**1.2** The minimum criteria apply to those aspects that can be controlled by the organization or on which it can exercise influence.

**1.3** This standard applies to conformity assessment bodies seeking accreditation from the relevant national accreditation authority (see foreword) mandated by the relevant national legislation (see foreword), in that the requirements are used in the certification process.

**1.4** It also applies to organizations in the tourism sector that issue general claims regarding their performance in relation to sustainability.

**1.5** Other organizations in the tourism sector might apply this standard in any of the following ways:

- a) to implement, maintain and enhance sustainable practices for their operations;
- b) to ensure compliance with their own defined responsible tourism policy;
- c) to prepare for certification under this standard by a conformity assessment body; or
- e) to perform a first-party conformity assessment in accordance with the specified requirements of this standard.

### **2 Normative references**

Reserved.

### **3 Terms, definitions and abbreviations**

For the purposes of this document, the following terms, definitions and abbreviations apply.

#### **3.1 Terms and definitions**

##### **3.1.1**

##### **accreditation**

third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks

[SANS 17000:2005]

##### **3.1.2**

##### **attestation**

issue of a statement, based on a decision following review, that fulfilment of specified requirements has been demonstrated

[SANS 17000:2005]

##### **3.1.3**

##### **benefit**

monetary or non-monetary advantage (or both)

##### **3.1.4**

##### **certification**

third-party attestation related to products, processes, systems or persons

[SANS 17000:2005]

##### **3.1.5**

##### **conformity assessment**

demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled

[SANS 17000:2005]

##### **3.1.6**

##### **conformity assessment body**

body that performs conformity assessment services

[SANS 17000:2005]

##### **3.1.7**

##### **conformity assessment scheme**

conformity assessment programme

conformity assessment system related to specified objects of conformity assessment, to which the same specified requirements, specific rules and procedures apply

[SANS 17000:2005]

##### **3.1.8**

##### **corrective action**

action to eliminate the cause of a detected nonconformity or other undesirable situation

[SANS 9000:2005]

**3.1.9**

**designated group**

as defined in the relevant national legislation (see foreword)

**3.1.10**

**general claim**

statement that is not independently verified

NOTE Some organizations often make this claim of their own accord. There is no verification organization behind this claim.

**3.1.11**

**local**

pertaining to the local area of the organization

**3.1.12**

**local area**

in the case of tourism organizations located within *urban areas*, the local municipal area within which the tourism organizations are located, and in the case of tourism organizations located within *rural areas*, the district municipal area within which the tourism organizations are located

**3.1.13**

**local community**

all people who live in the local area of the tourism organization

**3.1.14**

**national accreditation body**

sole body in a member state that performs accreditation with authority derived from the State

[EU 765/2008/EC:2008]

**3.1.15**

**people with disabilities**

as defined in the relevant national legislation (see foreword)

**3.1.16**

**responsible purchasing**

process in which organizations buy products and services that have a lesser or reduced negative effect and enhanced positive impact on human health and the natural, social, cultural and local economic environment when compared to other products and services that serve the same purpose

**3.1.17**

**responsible purchasing policy**

overall intentions and direction of an organization on responsible purchasing, formally expressed by the tourism organization

**3.1.18**

**responsible tourism**

tourism management strategy in which the tourism sector and tourists take responsibility to protect and conserve the natural environment, respect and conserve local cultures and ways of life, and contribute to stronger local economies and a better quality of life for local people

**3.1.19**

**responsible tourism policy**

overall intentions and direction of an organization on responsible tourism, formally expressed by the tourism organization

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### **3.1.20**

#### **review**

verification of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of selection and determination activities, and the results of these activities, with regard to fulfilment of specified requirements by an object of conformity assessment

[SANS 17000:2005]

### **3.1.21**

#### **small enterprise**

as defined in the relevant national legislation (see foreword)

### **3.1.22**

#### **specified requirement**

need or expectation that is stated

[SANS 17000:2005]

### **3.1.23**

#### **standard**

document approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for products or related processes and production methods, with which compliance is not mandatory

[WTO/TBT Agreement:1995]

### **3.1.24**

#### **sustainability**

use of resources in an environmentally responsible, socially just and economically viable manner, taking care of present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

### **3.1.25**

#### **sustainability management system**

management system that directs and controls an organization's actions in relation to sustainability

### **3.1.26**

#### **tourism sector**

as defined in the relevant national legislation (see foreword)

## **3.2 Abbreviations**

**HIV/AIDS** human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

## **4 Principles of responsible tourism**

Responsible tourism is based on the following minimum set of principles:

- a) avoid waste and overconsumption;
- b) use local resources in a sustainable manner;
- c) maintain and encourage natural, economic, social and cultural diversity;
- d) be sensitive to the host culture;

- e) involve people from the local area in the planning and decision-making;
- f) assess the environmental, social and economical impact as a prerequisite to developing tourism;
- g) ensure that people from the local area are involved in and benefit from tourism;
- h) market tourism that is responsible, and that respects the local, natural and cultural environments; and
- i) monitor the impact of tourism and ensure open disclosure of information.

Several initiatives have been undertaken to establish this minimum set of principles. Although their precise wording may vary, they advocate a common core set of principles.

## **5 Requirements**

### **5.1 Sustainable operations and management**

**5.1.1** The organization shall comply with all relevant national, provincial and local legislation, regulations, licences and permits, as may be required.

**5.1.2** The organization shall establish a responsible tourism policy that is suitable to its reality and scale, and that considers environmental, socio-cultural, economical, quality, health and safety issues.

**5.1.3** The organization shall have a long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its reality and scale, and that considers environmental, socio-cultural, economical, quality, health, and safety issues.

**5.1.4** The organization shall establish and implement procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of its sustainability actions. Such information should be used in the critical review of the sustainability management system.

**5.1.5** The organization shall facilitate staff awareness of and training in its responsible tourism policy.

**5.1.6** The organization shall make publicly available the responsible tourism policy and information about its associated activities.

**5.1.7** Promotional materials shall be accurate and complete, shall not promise more than can be delivered by the organization and shall not make misleading claims regarding sustainability.

**5.1.8** In the design and construction of buildings and infrastructure the organization shall

- a) respect the natural or cultural heritage surroundings in the siting, design, impact assessment, and land rights and acquisition, and
- b) use locally appropriate principles of sustainable construction.

**5.1.9** The organization shall provide access for people with disabilities and special needs.

**5.1.10** The organization shall invite customer feedback on responsible tourism in the organization and shall take corrective action where appropriate.

## **5.2 Social and cultural criteria**

**5.2.1** The organization shall contribute to the protection of sites that are of local historical, archaeological, cultural and spiritual importance and that are located on its properties.

**5.2.2** The organization shall provide, to the local communities or residents, where applicable, reasonable access to sites of historical, social, cultural or religious significance that are located on its properties.

**5.2.3** The activities of the tourism organization shall not jeopardize the provision of basic services, such as water, energy and sanitation, to neighbouring communities.

**5.2.4** The organization shall use elements of local art, architecture, and cultural heritage in its operations, design, decor, food and shops. In so doing, the organization shall acknowledge the intellectual property rights of third parties.

**5.2.5** The organization shall support local development initiatives in consultation with the people from the local area who are affected.

**5.2.6** The organization shall provide opportunities for visitors to purchase local products and services.

**5.2.7** Historical and archaeological artefacts may not be sold, traded or displayed, unless permitted by law.

**5.2.8** The organization shall provide a code of behaviour for visits to local cultural, historical and religious sites or communities. Such code shall be developed in conjunction with the affected parties.

**5.2.9** The organization shall provide information to staff about HIV/AIDS and general well-being.

## **5.3 Economic criteria**

**5.3.1** The organization shall use fair and equitable processes for recruitment and advancement, in relation to race, gender and disability.

**5.3.2** The organization shall employ people, including in management positions, from the local area, with a particular emphasis on designated groups.

**5.3.3** The organization shall provide training opportunities for staff relevant to the organizational context.

**5.3.4** The organization shall purchase local and fair trade services and goods, where available, and set targets for improvement.

**5.3.5** The organization shall demonstrate support to small enterprises.

**5.3.6** The organization shall pay employees a living wage that is equal to or above the legal minimum.

**5.3.7** The organization shall prohibit child labour, forced labour and sexual exploitation.

**5.3.8** The organization shall report transparently on the use of guest contributions, where relevant.

## **5.4 Environmental criteria**

**5.4.1** The organization shall have a responsible purchasing policy.

**5.4.2** The organization shall measure energy consumption, indicating all energy sources as a percentage of the overall consumption, and shall adopt quantitative goals and measures to decrease overall consumption.

**5.4.3** The organization shall measure water consumption, indicating all sources as a percentage of the overall consumption, and shall adopt quantitative goals and measures to decrease the overall consumption and improve the reuse of waste water.

**5.4.4** The organization shall implement and manage actions associated with its operations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other contributors to climate change.

**5.4.5** The organization shall implement a waste management plan, addressing both solid and liquid wastes, with quantitative goals to minimize waste produced.

**5.4.6** The organization shall limit the use of harmful substances (for example pesticides, paints, swimming pool disinfectants, cleaning materials, sanitation material and guest amenities); and substitute these substances with environmentally friendly alternatives where possible.

**5.4.7** The organization shall implement practices to reduce pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds and other pollutants, as applicable.

**5.4.8** The organization shall adhere to any national and international requirements that govern the trade in listed, endangered or threatened (or any combination of these) species and shall alert visitors to these requirements.

**5.4.9** The organization shall not hold captive any wildlife without the required permits and appropriate enclosures.

**5.4.10** The organization shall use plants of indigenous species for landscaping and restoration.

**5.4.11** The organization shall take measures to eradicate invasive alien plant species.

**5.4.12** The organization shall contribute to local biodiversity conservation, including supporting natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value.

**5.4.13** The organization shall avoid adverse effects on ecosystems, and shall rectify any negative environmental impact resulting from its activities.

**5.4.14** The organization shall provide environmental information to visitors so that they can reduce their impact on nature and natural resources.

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